CITY OF

VENTURA

Senior Services Strategic Plan
DRAFT - January 2020

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Executive Summary –
Ventura, CA Senior Services Strategic Plan

This Senior Services Strategic Plan was created to allow the City of Ventura to identify potential gaps in senior services, and to develop strategies for meeting them. A key aspect was to involve seniors and the others who work with them within the community, resulting in specific goals and recommendations.

The process began in August 2019, and was completed by March 2020. The strategic planning process included:

» Over 69,000 community members reached about the project via online and in-person platforms
» Direct information gathering from more than 175 seniors, staff, partners, and related stakeholders
» Review of all related planning efforts
» Survey results from 680 Senior-focused Respondents
» Detailed demographics and relevant trends analysis
» Presentations of Findings and Visioning Session to identify feasible recommendations
» Public, staff, and stakeholder review of the plan at the draft stage
» Evaluation of:

◊ Spaces and facilities
◊ Programs and services
◊ Staffing, marketing, and customer service
◊ Gaps and potential partners

The plan was designed to include indentification and consensus on:

- **Assessment of key programs facilities, and/or services for seniors in Ventura**
- **The planning context**
- **Identification of the City's capacity for providing the senior services and programs**
- **Recommendations for imporvements**
- **Realistic short- and medium-term goals with an Action Plan**

Figure 1:
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The plan was guided by two primary theoretical concepts and frameworks. The first is *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* and the second is the *World Health Organization's Eight Domains of Quality of Life.*

The Ventura Senior Strategic Plan analysis identified 28 Key Issues to be addressed, organized under Five Primary Themes:

1. General Overall Levels of Service
2. Organizational and Administrative
3. Program and Service Delivery
4. Facilities and Amenities
5. Financial Needs

Key Strengths

Highly effective and dedicated current professional staff, Strong programs, Numberous partnerships

Validated needs for additional staffing, Funding, Programs and program locations, Improved transportation options

Key Challenges

Goals for the Senior Services Strategic Plan

Eleven Goals were identified, and each included strategies and objectives. Many of the goals include working with the Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Department and the City of Ventura overall to better integrate and improve services for seniors in Ventura, along with a strong justification for and emphasis on increased staffing, funding, and partnerships. Recommendations and an action plan were provided that included the objectives, along with identifying who may be responsible, suggested timing, potential financial impact, and anticipated outcomes/measures of success.

Summary Goals for the next ten years (2020-2030) include:

Organizational Goals

Goal 1.0 - Work with partners to improve housing
Goal 2.0 - Improve transportation options for Seniors
Goal 3.0 - Complete a Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Departmental Master Plan
Goal 4.0 - Utilize partners to expand reach of services available to seniors
Goal 5.0 - Expand staffing and resources for Seniors

Enhanced Programs and Service Delivery Goals

Goal 6.0 - Expand awareness of senior services programs
Goal 7.0 - Add additional needed programs for Seniors

Goals for Improved Facilities and Amenities for Seniors

Goal 8.0 - Ensure that all facilities are ADA accessible
Goal 9.0 - Update and upgrade the Ventura Avenue Adult Center
Goal 10.0 - Explore additional facilities within overall Department Master Planning

Goal to Improve Financial Investment for Senior Services

Goal 11.0 - Identify and increase appropriate levels for revenue and resource allocation

GreenPlay LLC
www.GreenPlayllc.com

This project was facilitated and completed by GreenPlay LLC under contract for the City of Ventura, working with staff from the Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Department, community members, and partners.

I. Introduction and Background

A. Project Vision

This project began with a Strategic Kick-Off (SKO) series of discussions to identify the Project Vision, Critical Success Factors, a detailed engagement strategy and to outline the methods and meetings to make it successful.

The *Project Vision* was defined to:

> *Allow the City of Ventura to identify potential gaps in senior services and to develop strategies for meeting them.*

> *Involve seniors within the community, resulting in specific goals and recommendations.*

The Plan was designed to include identification of and consensus on:

» Assessment of key programs, facilities, and/or services for seniors in Ventura
» Identification of the City's capacity for providing the senior services and programs related to the WHO eight domains of quality of life
» Recommendations for improvements
» Realistic short and medium-term goals along with a 5-year action plan
» The Planning Context

Senior Services Section: Core Clientele

The Senior Services Section is within the Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Department within the City of Ventura. The Section provides a variety of programs that meet the needs of a diverse and growing population. The target demographic for senior programs for this Section is defined as:

People over the age of 50, at all levels of physical activity and limitations, who are interested in socialization and activity, health-oriented, and have independent living skills.

B. Planning Process – The Project Methodology

The project started in September 2019 with the Strategic Kick-Off meetings and initial document exchanges.

The initial Information Gathering Phase occurred in October to December 2019, including:

» Collection and review of relevant planning and programming documents
» Trends Analysis
» A detailed update of current and projected demographics
» Onsite staff, partners, and community engagement meetings including:
  ◊ Focus Groups
  ◊ Public Meetings
  ◊ Individual Stakeholder Interviews
» Creation and implementation of a Senior Needs Assessment Survey

The Findings and Visioning meetings were held in December 2019, and the Draft Plan was presented in January 2020. All phases included staff, public, and key stakeholder engagement.

The citizen involvement strategy approach was designed to include residents, user groups, partners, associations, and other stakeholders that they were are provided an opportunity to participate in the development of the plan, as shown in **Figure 2**:

Figure 2: Schedule Overview of the Planning Process
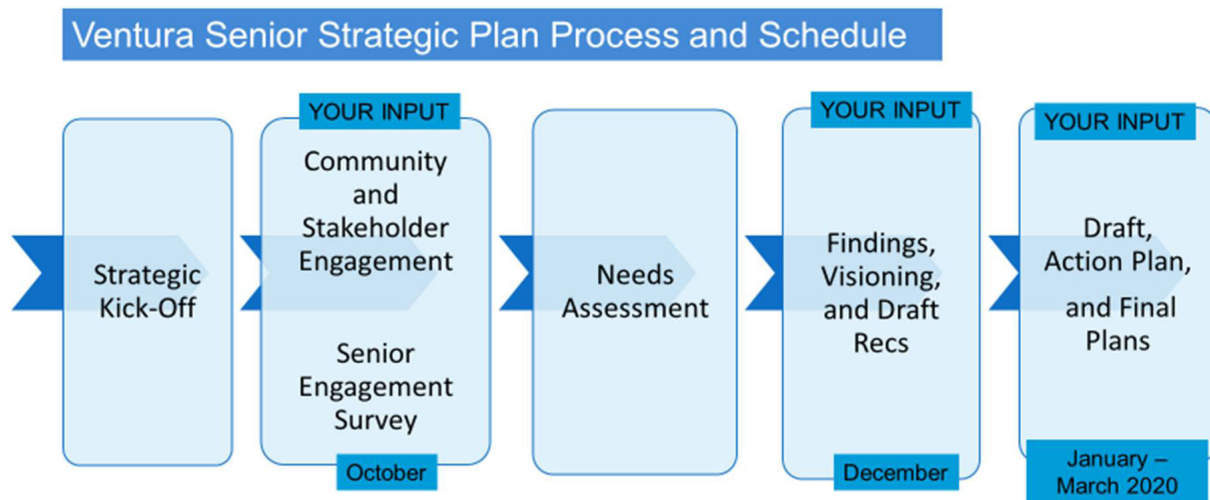
The project was designed to create **a Strategic Plan of Action** – to answer the key question of:

How do we develop and meet current and future needs?

To figure that out, the team evaluated:

» Spaces and facilities
» Programs and services
» Staffing and customer service
» Gaps and potential partners

C. The Community

For purposes of this plan, "the Community" primarily includes the adults 50+ and the services for them that are owned and managed by the City of Ventura. It became quickly apparent from review of previous planning materials and initial discussions that the project would need to look closely and separately at what is provided within the City of Ventura from both an "East Ventura" and "West Ventura" standpoint. To do so, a descriptive dividing line was created north to south along Victoria Avenue, as shown in **Figure 3.**

Figure 3: Map of Facilities for Senior Services
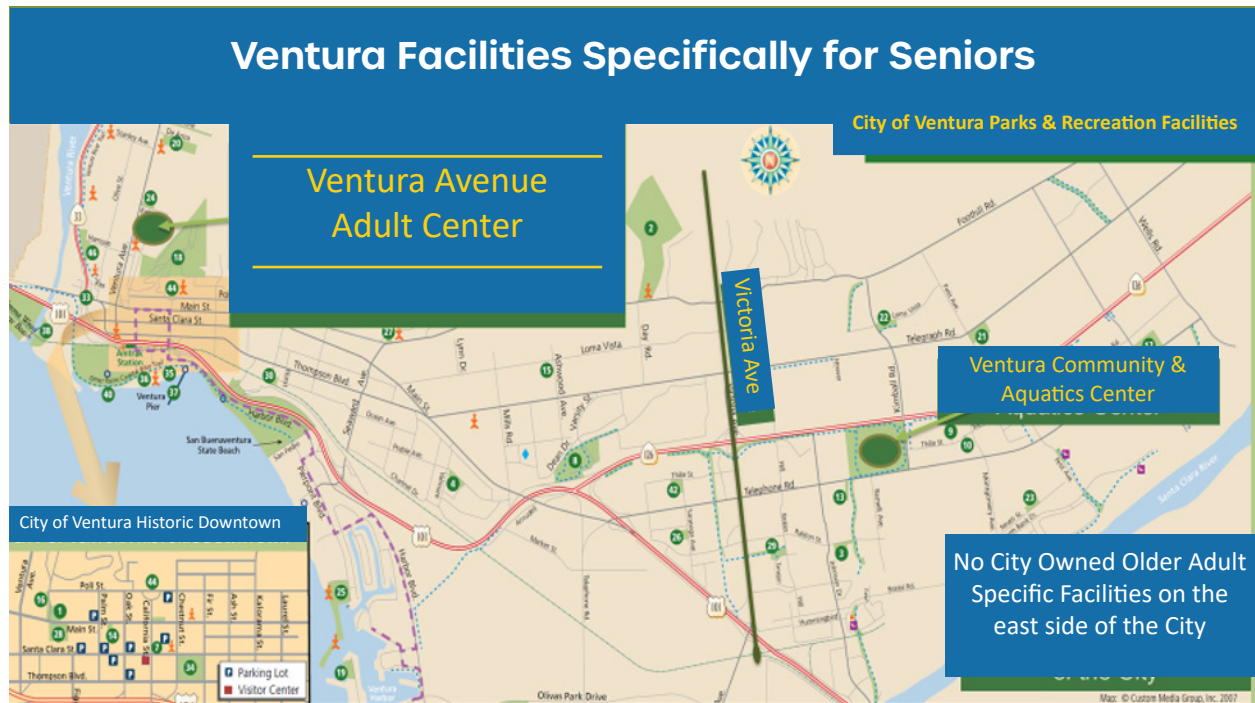
The only facilities currently available specifically for seniors in Ventura are at the **Ventura Avenue Adult Center (VAAC)**. Additional programs that are available for active older adults are offered in other locations, including the Ventura Aquatics Center. Additional information on programs and facilities is included in Section III.A.

Senior Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee

As part of this planning effort, City Council established the *Senior Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee* to support the development of the Senior Strategic Plan, and assist in engaging the community in the process. The committee consisted of five City of Ventura residents. Meetings, open to the public, were held monthly on Tuesdays, from 1:30-2:30pm, at City Hall from October 2019 - February 2020.

Demographics Analysis for Ventura, CA

By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision making and resource allocation strategies for the provision of parks, recreation, and open space management. This demographic profile was compiled in October 2019 from a combination of sources including the ESRI Business Analyst, American Community Survey, and U.S. Census. The following topics are covered in detail in this report:

- Population Summary
- Gender & Age Distribution
- Race/Ethnic Character
- Educational Attainment
- Household Data
- Employment
- Health Rankings
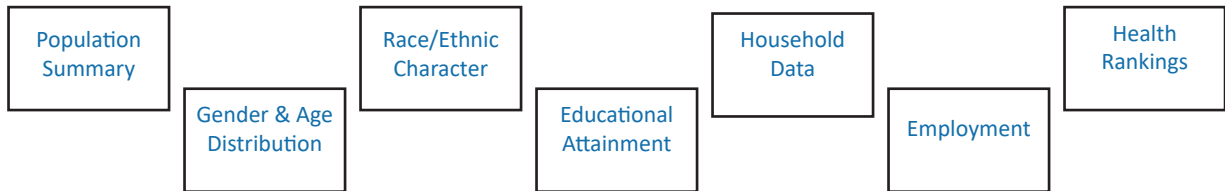
Figure 4: City of Ventura Demographic Overview

Demographic Profile

Source: Esri Business Analyst, U.S. Census

EDUCATION

- 9% No High School Diplomas
- 20% High School Graduate
- 36% Some College
- 35% Bachelor's, Grad/Prof Degree

2019 RACE/ETHNICITY

- 37% Hispanic/Latino/Spanish
- 73.1% White
- 1.8% Black/African American
- 3.9% Asian
- 1.3% American Indian
- .02% Pacific Islander
- 5.9% Two or More Races
- 13.9 Other

INCOME

- $74,696 Median Household Income
- $35,402 Per Capita Income
- $113,759 Median Net Worth

EMPLOYMENT

- 9% Unemployment Rate
- White Collar 66%
- Blue Collar 17%
- Services 17%

KEY FACTS

111,587	40.0	41,948	$57,781
Population	Median Age	Households	Median Disposalbe Income

Figure 5: City of Ventura Subareas

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census
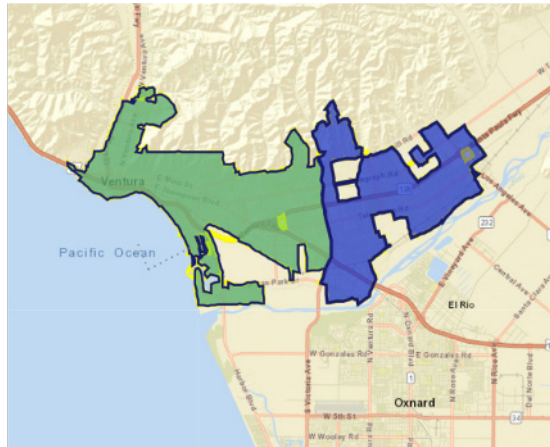
For purposes of this study, two subareas were identified to explore the demographic differences in East and West Ventura. This methodology was also used in the Senior Needs Assessment Survey to collect and analyze feedback from residents. The dividing line was determined to be Victoria Avenue, which can be seen in **Figure 5**. Using this separation, West Ventura, at approximately 13 square miles, is larger than East Ventura, at 8.75 square miles. An overview of key demographic characteristics is listed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: 2019 Demographic Overview of City of Ventura Subareas

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

2019 Data	City of Ventura	East Ventura	West Ventura
Population	111,587	51,556	60,059
Growth Rate	0.43%	0.52%	0.32%
Household Income	$74,696	$81,496	$66,362
Median Home Value	$579,197	$555,912	$607,667
Median Age	40.0	40.4	39.7
Unemployment Rate	4.0%	4.5%	3.6%

Population

In 2000, the population in the City of Ventura reached 101,676, with West Ventura making up 55% of the population, and East Ventura making up 45%. If estimated growth rates continue, the Ventura population could reach close to 120,000 in 2032.

Figure 6: Projected Population Trends from 2000 to 2032
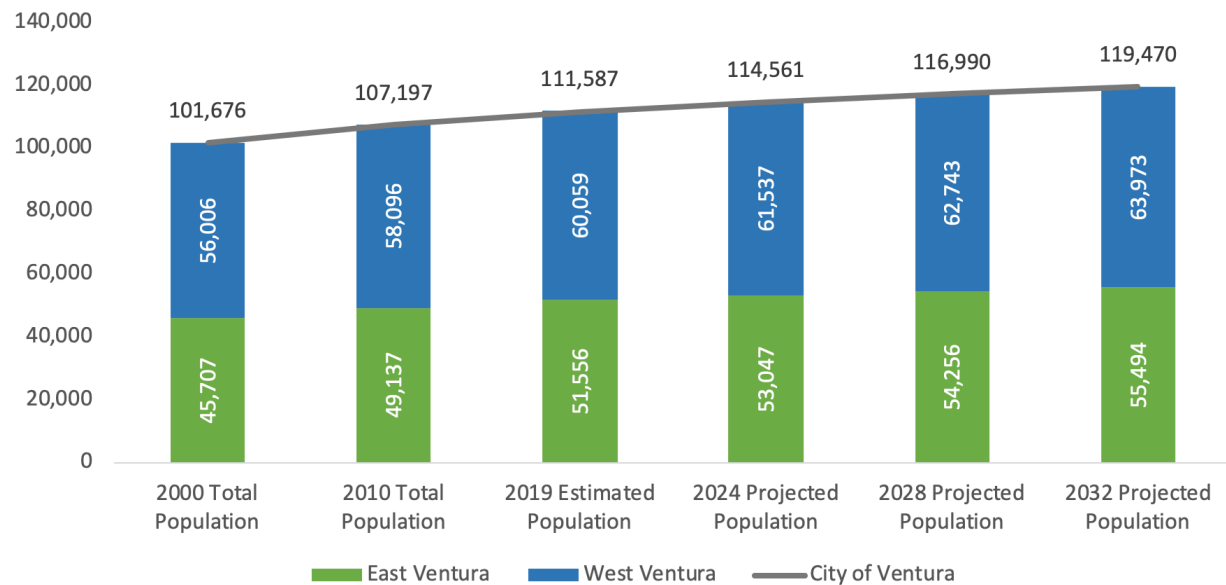
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census; Projections estimated based on 2019 – 2024 population growth rates of City of Ventura (0.53%), East Ventura (0.57%), and West Ventura (0.49%).

Growth rates can be a strong comparative indicator of an area's potential for economic development. From 2010 to 2019, the population of City of Ventura grew 0.43%. East Ventura, which grew at a rate of 0.52%, had a higher growth rate than West Ventura (0.36%). These growth rates were slower than both California (0.96%) and the United States (0.80%).

Figure 7: Population Projected Annual Growth Rate (2010 - 2019)
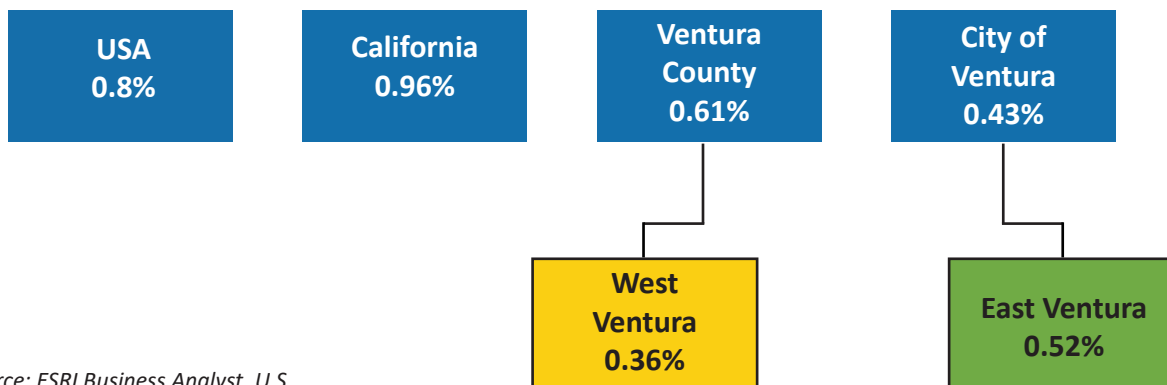
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Age & Gender Distribution

The median age in the City of Ventura in 2019 was 40 years old, older than the median age of California (36.3) and the United States (38.5). The median age of East and West Ventura was very similar to the overall City – both areas are expected to see the median age increase through 2024.

Figure 8: Median Age of City of Ventura between 2010 and 2024

City of Ventura	East Ventura	West Ventura
38.9 2010	**39.1** 2010	**38.4** 2010
40.0 2019	**40.4** 2019	**39.7** 2019
40.7 2024	**41.0** 2024	**40.5** 2024
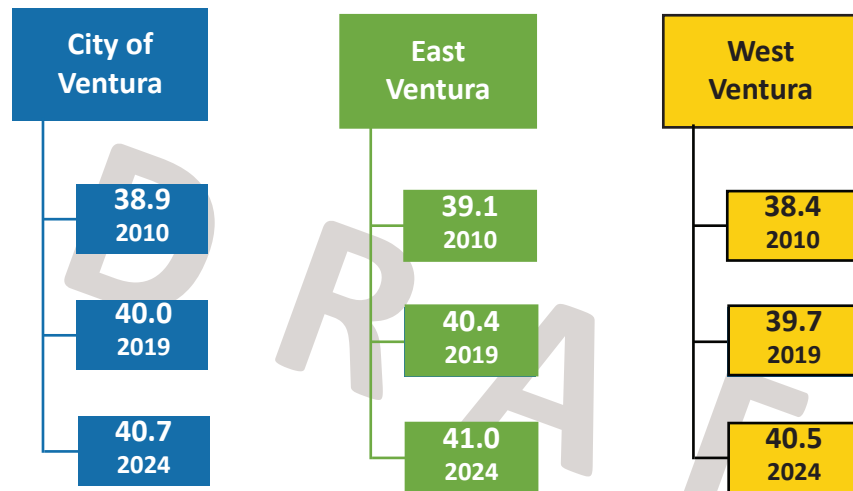
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Looking at the population age breakdown by five-year increments in the **Figure 8** below, there are a few key conclusions.

» The City of Ventura had a high concentration of both young adults (25 – 29 years old) and older adults (55 – 59 years old). Both of these age groups made up more than seven percent of the population, respectively.

» The City of Ventura had higher population of those 50 and older (37.4%) than the State of California (32.6%) in 2019.

» The overall age distribution is expected to stay relatively stable from 2019 to 2024, but there will be an increase in median age as large groups of Baby Boomers and younger seniors age.

» There are no major differences in East Ventura than West Ventura when it comes to the 50 and older population.

Figure 9: 2019 Age Distribution in City of Ventura Compared to California

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census
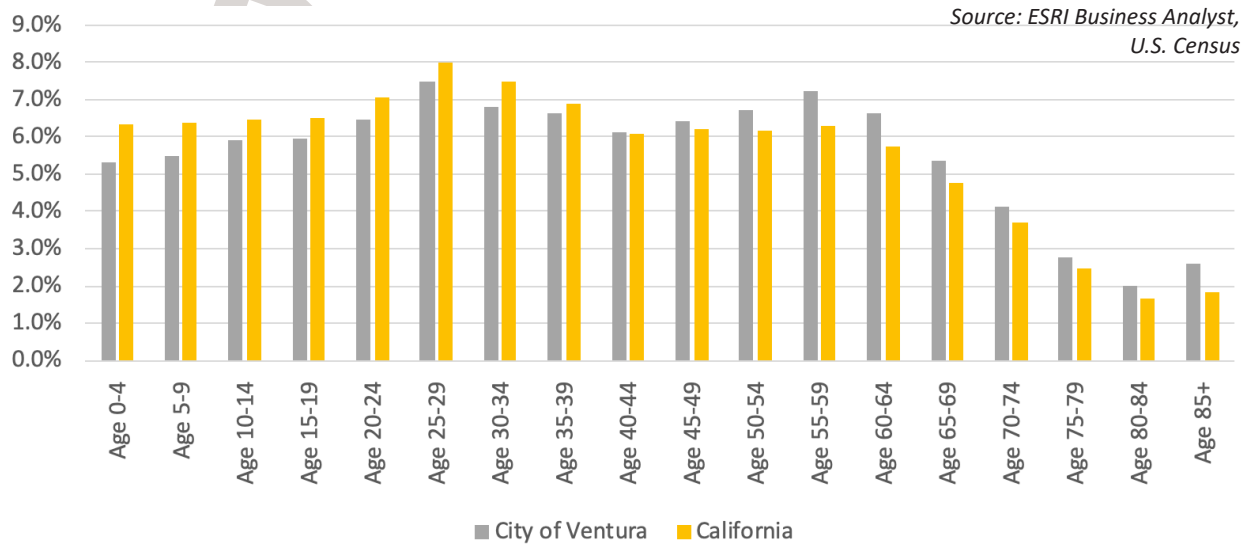
Figure 10: 2019 Age Distribution of 50 Years and Older Population in East and West Ventura

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census
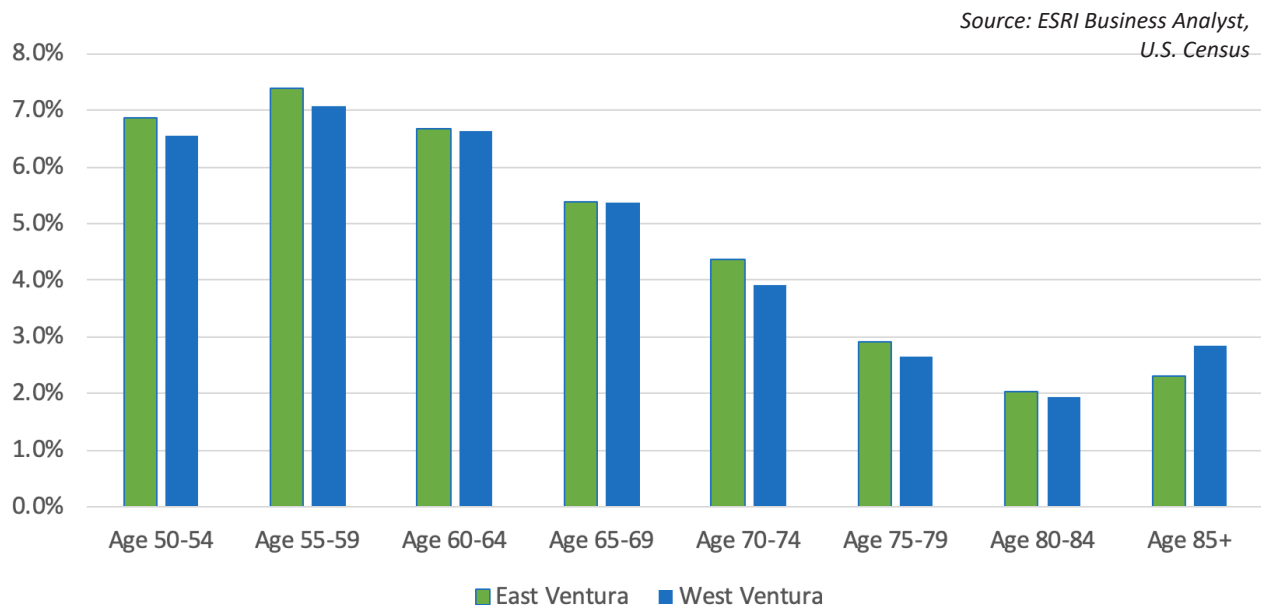
The City of Ventura has a very balanced gender distribution. Gender distribution is similar in both East and West Ventura.

Table 2: City of Ventura Gender Distribution Compared to State and National Averages

	City of Ventura	California	USA
2019 Female Population (%)	50.49%	50.28%	50.75%
2019 Male Population (%)	49.51%	49.40%	49.25%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

Race/Ethnic Character

In the United States, communities are generally becoming more diverse. Before comparing this data, it is important to note how the U.S. Census classifies and counts individuals who identify as Hispanic. The Census notes that Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arrival in the United States. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish are included in all of the race categories. **Figure 10** reflects the approximate racial/ethnic population distribution.

» The City of Ventura had a population more reflective of the United States than the State of California in 2019, with 73% of the population identifying as Caucasian/White. For comparison, the State of California only has a population of 37% Caucasian/White.
» In the City of Ventura, 37% of the population identified as Hispanic. This is higher than the national average of 19%.
» The minority population, which made up approximately 46% of Ventura, is composed primarily of Hispanics (37%), other race not listed in the U.S. Census (14%), two or more races (6%), Asians (4%), and Blacks/African Americans (2%).

Figure 11: 2019 Racial/Ethnic Diversity of City of Ventura

	White Population	Black/African American Population	American Indian/Alaska Native Population	Asian Population	Pacific Islander Population	Other Race Population	Population of Two or More Races	Hispanic Population
City of Ventura	73.06%	1.81%	1.27%	3.87%	0.21%	13.90%	5.88%	37.03%
California	36.73%	5.86%	0.94%	14.92%	0.40%	17.90%	5.40%	39.59%
USA	69.90%	12.93%	0.98%	5.82%	0.19%	6.99%	3.49%	18.57%
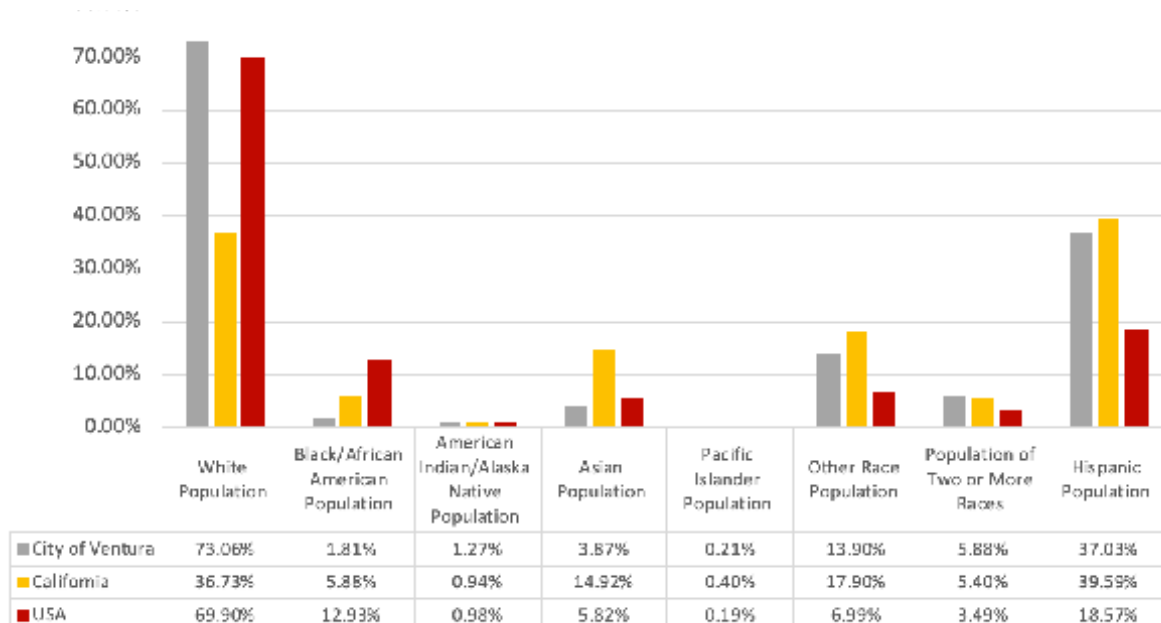
According to the American Community Survey (2013 – 2017), approximately 1.8% of Ventura residents 65 and older speak Spanish, but only 0.38% of then cannot speak English at all. West Ventura has a higher percentage of older adults that cannot speak any English.

Table 3: 65 and Older Spanish Speaking Population

Variable	City of Ventura	East Ventura	West Ventura	California
65+ speak Spanish & No English	0.38%	0.26%	0.45%	0.56%
65+ speak Spanish & English Very Well/Well	1.16%	1.16%	1.11%	1.19%
65+ speak Spanish	1.83%	1.77%	1.81%	2.30%

Source: American Community Survey
(2013 – 2017)

Educational Attainment

The chart below shows the percentage of residents (18+) that obtained various levels of education. The City of Ventura ranks higher than the State of California and the United States when it comes to educational attainment. For instance, California had a no-diploma rate of 16.21%, while in Ventura it was only 9.29%. West Ventura had a higher percentage of graduate/professional degrees than East Ventura, but educational levels were similar across the other education attainment levels.

Table 4: 2019 City of Ventura Educational Attainment Comparison with Neighboring Geographies

Level of Education	City of Ventura	East Ventura	West Ventura	California	USA
Less than 9th Grade	4.25%	3.57%	4.82%	8.95%	4.90%
9th/12th Grade/ No Diploma	5.04%	5.45%	4.69%	7.26%	6.74%
High School Diploma	17.55%	18.69%	16.58%	18.58%	23.13%
GED/Alternative Credential	2.06%	1.88%	2.22%	2.25%	3.90%
Some College/No Degree	26.02%	26.67%	25.47%	21.00%	20.23%
Associate's Degree	10.06%	10.24%	9.95%	7.77%	8.58%
Bachelor's Degree	21.69%	21.70%	21.68%	21.35%	19.98%
Graduate/Professional Degree	13.30%	11.80%	14.58%	12.84%	12.54%

Household Data

» The median household income in Ventura in 2019 was $74,696. This was higher than the United States ($60,548), and very similar to the State of California ($74,520). East Ventura had a higher median income ($81,469) than West Ventura ($66,362).

» The median home value in City of Ventura in 2019 was $579,197, which was similar to that of California ($556,621) but much higher than the United States ($234,154). West Ventura had a higher median home value ($607,667) than East Ventura ($555,912).

» The average household size was 2.60 persons in City of Ventura, compared to 2.92 in California, and 2.59 in the United States.

» About 7.47% of households in City of Ventura received food stamps, compared to the rate in California at approximately 9.35%. West Ventura had a slightly higher percentage who receive food stamps (7.70%) compared to East Ventura (7.25%).

» Approximately one-quarter (24.4%) of residents lived with some sort of hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and/or independent living difficulty. This is similar to the national average (25%). There were no significant differences in West (24.75%) and East Ventura (23.67%).

Figure 12: Median Household Income Distribution in City of Ventura
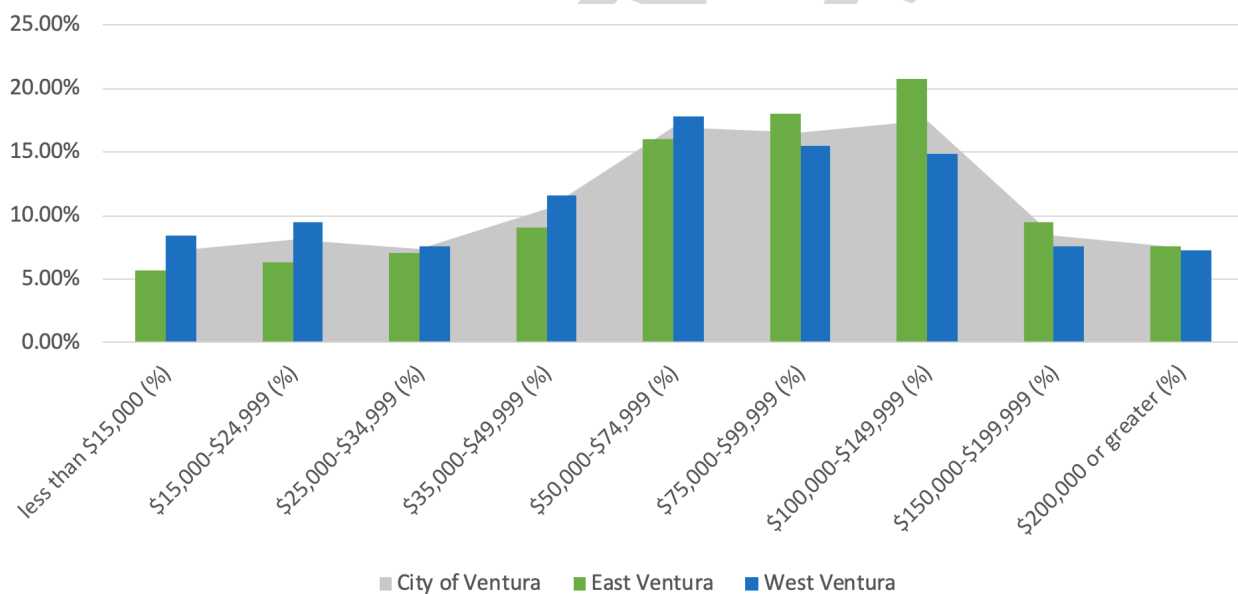
Poverty Levels by Age and Gender

In Ventura County, 10.3% of the population (85.8k out of 836k people) live below the poverty line, a number that is lower than the national average of 13.1%. The largest demographic living in poverty are Females 25 - 34, followed by Females 35 - 44 and then Females 18 - 24. The City of Ventura has higher incomes than the County overall, with fewer living in poverty. As depicted in **Figure 13**, more females live in poverty than males. While there are a large percentage of seniors living on fixed low incomes, the poverty rates for seniors are generally lower than for adults overall.

Figure 13: Poverty Rates in Ventura County by Age and Gender
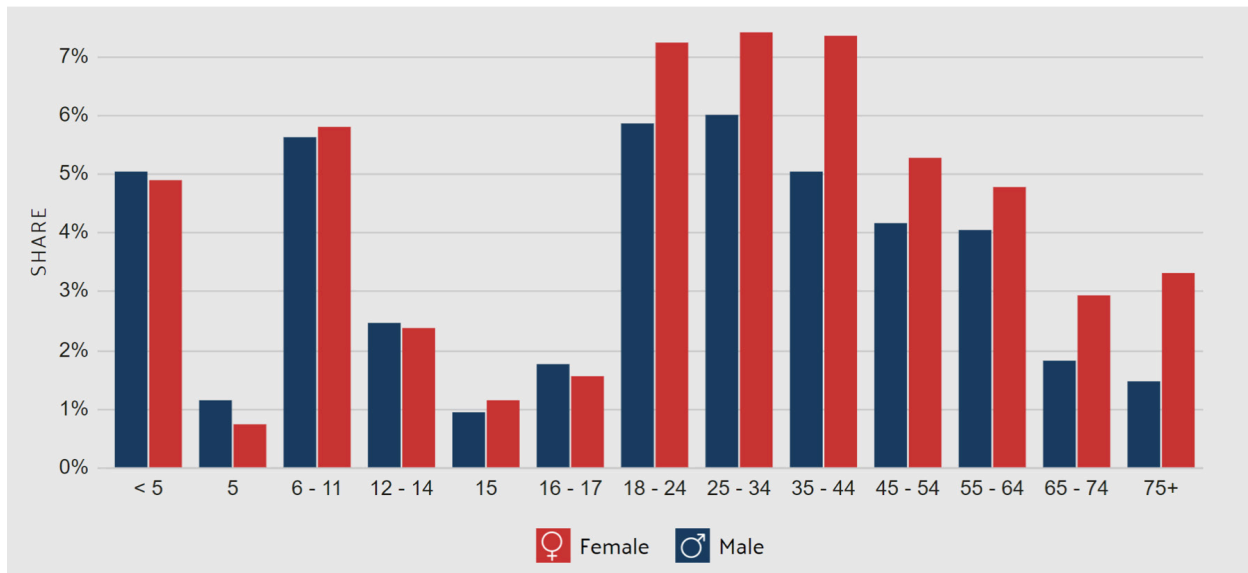
Data provided by the Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimate.

Employment

» Roughly 66% of the City of Ventura population was employed in white collar positions in 2019, typically performing in managerial, technical, administrative, and/or professional capacities. Approximately 17% were employed by blue collar positions, such as construction, maintenance, etc. About 17% of residents were employed by the service industry.

» 4% of the population was unemployed in 2019, compared to the rate of California (5.5%) and the United States (4.6%). Unemployment was higher in East Ventura (4.5%) than West Ventura (3.6%).

» In terms of commuting, 19% of workers spent seven or more hours commuting back and forth to work each week, and 79.1% of commuters drive alone in a car to work.

Figure 14: Employment Overview in City of Ventura, California
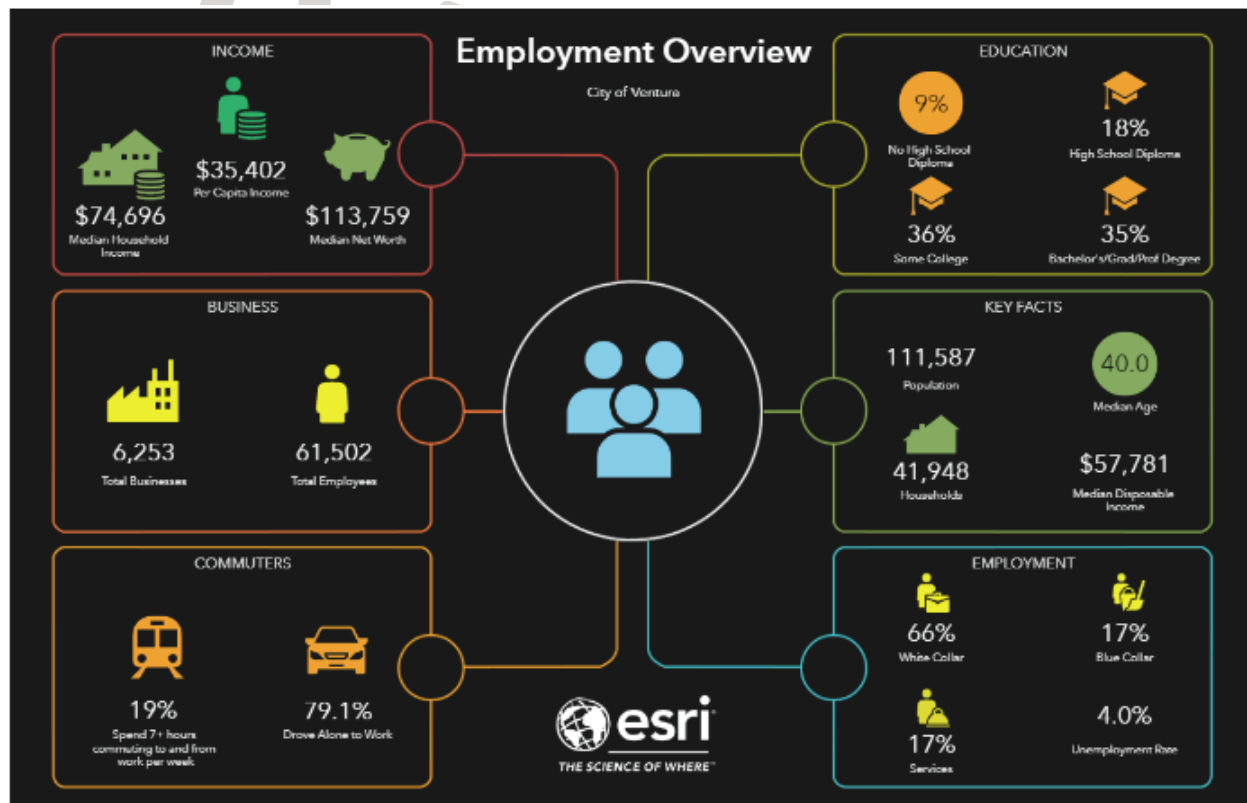
Health Rankings

Understanding the status of the community's health can help inform policies related to recreation and fitness. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps* provide annual insight on the general health of national, state, and county populations. The 2019 Rankings model shown in **Figure 14** highlights the topic areas reviewed by the Foundation.

The health ranking gauged the public health of the population based on "how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive," coupled with ranking factors including healthy behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors.[1]

Ventura County ranked
9th of 58
California Counties
for Health Outcomes.

Figure 15: County Health Ranking Model

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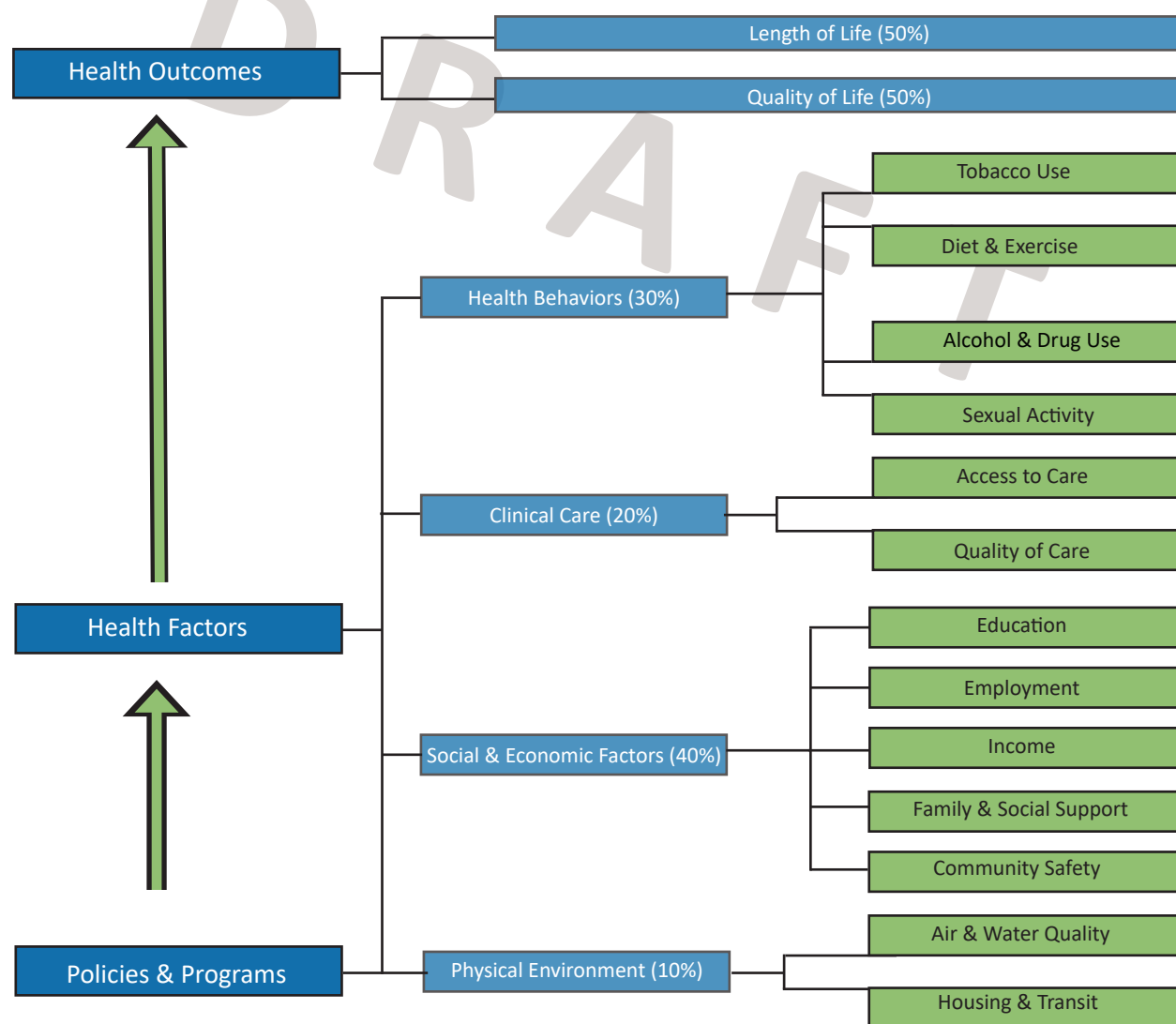
[1] University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings 2019, http://www.Countvhealthrankings.org

State Health Rankings

In 2019, the United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings Annual Report ranked California as the 12th healthiest state nationally. The health rankings consider and weigh social and environmental factors that tend to directly impact the overall health of state populations as illustrated in **Figure 15.** The state moved two positions down in the ranking since 2017.

Strengths of California health include:	**Challenges** of California health include:
Low prevalence of obesity	**High levels of air pollution**
Low infant mortality rate	**Low immunization coverage among children**
Low occupational fatality rate	**Low Tdap immunization coverage among adolescents**

Figure 16: 2019 California Health Ranking Overview

Source: United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings Annual Report 2017

D. Guiding Concepts for Evaluation

This project was theoretically guided by two primary concepts and frameworks. The first is **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**, which is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid, as shown in **Figure 16**. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards (most to least important needs), the needs are: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.

Figure 17: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow, A.H. (1943). "A theory of human motivation". *Psychological Review.* *50 (4): 370–96. CiteSeerX 10.1.1.334.7586. doi:10.1037/h0054346 – via* psychclassics.yorku.ca.

This theory presents that in order to live comfortably, humans must first have the basics – food, water, shelter, and safety – before they can begin to enjoy love, a sense of belonging, and self-actualization. Most humans living in the U.S. have the bottom two tiers of basic needs in place. The top three tiers are usually what make us decide where we choose to live. They are the factors that the Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Department (and specifically the Senior Services Section) can help address in Ventura.

The second guiding framework comes from the *World Health Organization's (WHO) Eight Domains of Quality of Life*, as shown in **Figure 17.**

Figure 18. WHO 8 Domains of Livability

WHO - Domains of Quality of Life

◊ **Housing**
◊ **Outdoor and indoor spaces**
◊ **Social participation**
◊ **Respect and social inclusion**
◊ **Transportation**
◊ **Civic participation and employment**
◊ **Communication and information**
◊ **Community support and health services**

Social
Physical
Cognitive
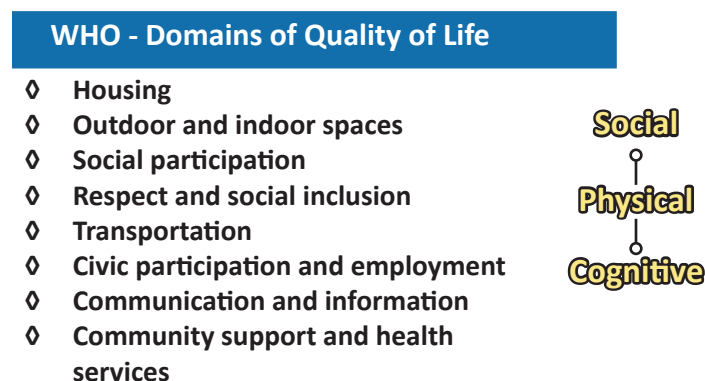
As we delve into evaluating how Senior Services are provided in Ventura, we want to carefully consider how all aspects of Quality of Livability are provided, including effects on social, cognitive, physical functions. A "checklist" that helped guide analysis on these domains is included in Appendix A.

E. Influencing Trends

A full trends report was provided to staff as a staff resource document. The following section identifies some the key trends related to overall provision of parks and recreation (not all are specific to seniors) that are likely to impact the provision of Senior Services in the next ten years for Ventura. These are listed in alphabetical order.

Administrative Trends in Parks & Recreation

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness. The traditional relationship with education and the sharing of facilities through joint-use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.[2]

In addition, the role of parks and recreation management has shifted beyond traditional facility oversight and activity programming. The ability to evaluate and interpret data is a critical component of strategic decision making. In an article in the Parks and Recreation Magazine from February 2019, there are several components that allow agencies to keep up with administrative trends and become an agent of change.[3]

1. Develop a digital transformation strategy – how will your agency innovate and adapt to technology?

2. Anticipate needs of the community through data – what information from your facilities, programs, and services can be collected and utilized for decision making?

3. Continuous education - How can you educate yourself and your team to have more knowledge and skills as technology evolves?

4. Focus on efficiency – in what ways can your operations be streamlined?

5. Embrace change as a leader – how can you help your staff to see the value in new systems and processes?

6. Reach out digitally – be sure that the public knows how to find you and ways that they can be involved.

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2 Brian Stapleton, "The Digital Transformation of Parks and Rec" Parks and Recreation, February 2019; https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/february/the-digital-transformation-of-parks-and-rec/
3 https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/february/the-digital-transformation-of-parks-and-rec/

ADA Compliance

On July 26, 1990, the federal government officially recognized the needs of people with disabilities through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This civil right law expanded rights for activities and services offered by both state and local governmental entities (Title II) and non-profit/for-profit entities (Title III). Parks and Recreation agencies are expected to comply by the legal mandate; which means eliminating physical barriers to provide access to facilities, and providing reasonable accommodations in regard to recreational programs through inclusive policies and procedures.

It is a requirement that agencies develop an ADA Transition Plan, which details how physical and structural barriers will be removed to facilitate access to programs and services. The Transition Plan also acts as a planning tool for budgeting and accountability.[4]

Agency Accreditation

Parks and recreation agencies are affirming their competencies and value through accreditation. This is achieved by an agency's commitment to 150 standards. Accreditation is a distinguished mark of excellence that affords external recognition of an organization's commitment to quality and improvement.

The National Recreation and Parks Association administratively sponsors two distinct accreditation programs: The Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT), which approves academic institutions, and the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), approves agencies. It is the only national accreditation of parks and recreation agencies, and is a valuable measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management, and service to the community.

Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

Increasingly, parks and recreation services are being seen as crucial to both preventive public health and economic vitality in communities. In 2017, the Outdoor Industry Association estimated that national consumer spending on outdoor recreation generated $887 billion in consumer spending and directly supported 7.6 million jobs.

» Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the most important community amenities considered when selecting a home.
» U.S. Forest Service research indicates that when the economic benefits produced by trees are assessed, the total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.[5]
» Nearly half of active Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.[6]

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4 Mark Trieglaff and Larry Labiak, National Recreation and Park Association: "Recreation and the Americans with Disabilities Act," Accessed August 2019: https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2016/august/recreation-and-the-americans-with-disabilities-act/
5 Nowak, David J., "Benefits of Community Trees," Brooklyn Trees, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report
6 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2016

The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space, a report from the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space[7] :

- » Physical activity makes people healthier.
- » Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- » Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- » Residential and commercial property values increase
- » Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- » Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- » Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- » Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- » Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- » Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- » Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

Fitness and Health Behavior

The figure below shows household participation in various fitness activities within Ventura. Participation was higher for the following activities:

- » Walking for Exercise (26.17%)
- » Swimming (16.43%)
- » Weight Lifting (11.35%)

Figure 19: Fitness and Wellness Participation of City of Ventura compared to the State of California
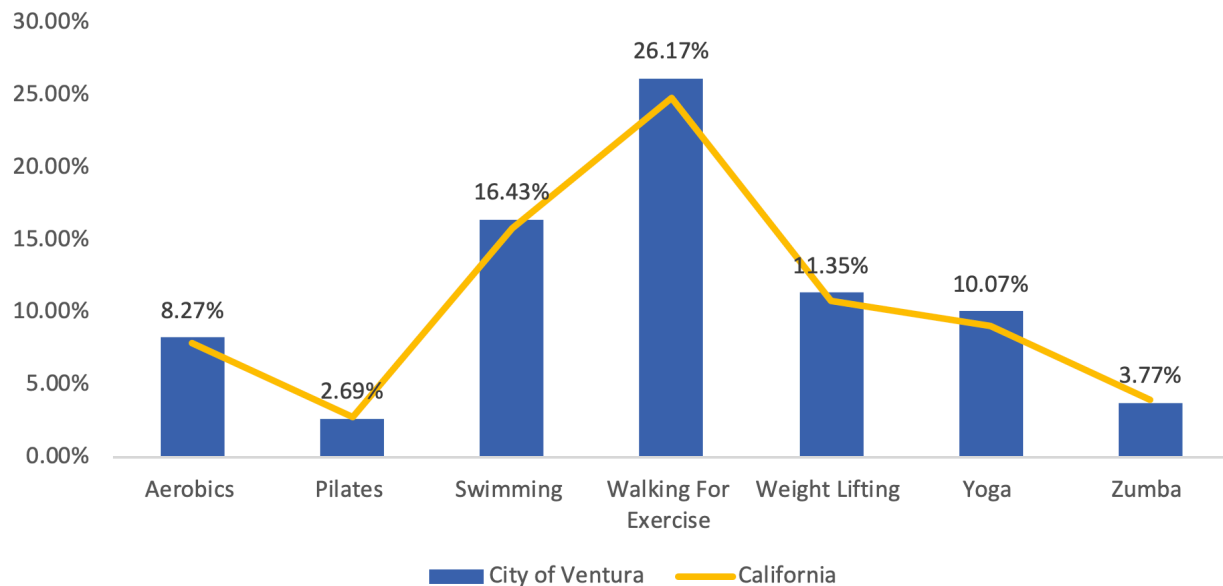
7 Paul M. Sherer, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space," The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006

Figure 20: Generational Fitness Trends

	Individual Sports	Racquet Sports	Team Sports	Outdoor Sports	Winter Sports	Water Sports	Fitness Sports
■ Gen Z (2000+)	48.2%	18.8%	58.8%	61.8%	13.1%	17.5%	50.6%
■ Millennials (1980-1999)	43.6%	20.2%	31.8%	57.4%	12.2%	20.3%	66.7%
■ Gen X (1965-1979)	36.9%	13.4%	17.9%	51.4%	7.0%	14.8%	66.2%
■ Boomers (1945-1964)	24.1%	7.1%	6.4%	38.6%	2.9%	9.2%	60.0%

Source: SFIA Topline Report

» In 2015, over 80% of Gen Z were active, with a quarter being active to a healthy level. Gen Z had the least percentage of inactives.

» Almost half (49%) of all Millennials were involved in high calorie burning activities.

» 48% of Gen X participated at least once a week in a fitness activity/sport.

» The Boomer generation was the least active in 2015, 34% reporting to no activity and only 37% involved in high calorie burning exercises.

Healthy Aging in Parks

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed the *Healthy Aging in Parks* initiative to support parks and recreation agencies in serving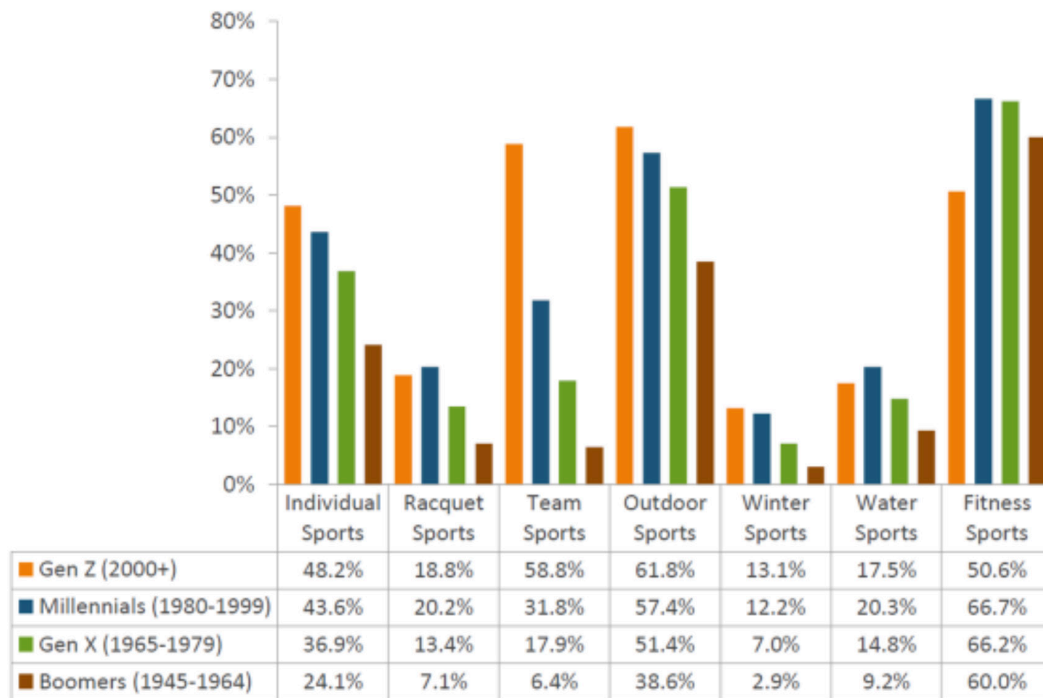 older adults in the community. This initiative is based on the needs of older adults, including physical fitness, socialization, transportation, and other quality of life desires. Some of the primary strategies of the Healthy Aging in Parks initiative are as follows:

» Promote participation in physical activity through providing social engagement
» Provide safe environments – both inside and outside – that limit barriers for participation
» Utilize evidence-based interventions to increase support and manage chronic diseases[8]

Park and Recreation agencies can assist the aging demographic in staying healthy through providing programs and facilities. According to an NRPA survey, nine in ten local parks and recreation agencies offer services for older adults.

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8   "About Healthy Aging in Parks" National Recreation and Park Association, Accessed September 2019, https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/partnerships/initiatives/healthy-aging-in-parks/healthy-aging-in-parks-about/

Surveys reveal that agencies are most likely to the following services:

- » Exercise classes (91%)
- » Field trips, tours, vacations (70%)
- » Arts and crafts classes (67%)
- » Opportunities to volunteer in recreation centers (58%)
- » Special events and festivals (58%)
- » Group walks (53%)
- » Opportunities to volunteer in parks (48%)
- » Paid job opportunities to lead exercise classes, work in recreation centers or at parks (47%)

For underserved older adults, parks and recreation agencies can be a critical resource, providing low-cost meals, low-cost or free fitness programs, and transportation services. However, many organizations are faced with barriers that inhibit the ability to offer these programs, with the top responses being facility space shortage (58%) and inadequate funding (50%). In order to overcome these obstacles, agencies will often develop relationships with partners in the community who may specialize in serving the older adults. Some of the primary partners include:

- » Area agencies on aging (58%)
- » Retirement communities (44%)
- » Senior meals providers (42%)
- » Hospitals and doctors' offices (39%)
- » Local health departments (39%)
- » Health insurance companies (38%)
- » Community-based organizations (faith based, YMCAs, etc.) (38%)

As adults continue to age, many agencies offer a localized bus service for seniors in need of transportation. This type of service can help seniors maintain their independence while meeting their needs for grocery shopping, medical appointments, and other basic services. In addition, transportation services can help combat isolation by providing a socializing experience. Some agencies, such as the City of Walnut Creek, California, are experimenting with new technologies, such as Lyft, to further bridge the gap. Funding for the Lyft pilot program, which provides free rides for qualifying Senior Club members, was provided for by the Transportation Partnership and Cooperation for Contra Costa County (TRANSPAC). To account for a lack of smartphones and technical assistance among older adults, Walnut Creek created a Lyft reservation line where seniors can call and reserve a ride. Staff are also available at recreation centers to provide tutorials on how to use the app if desired. [9]
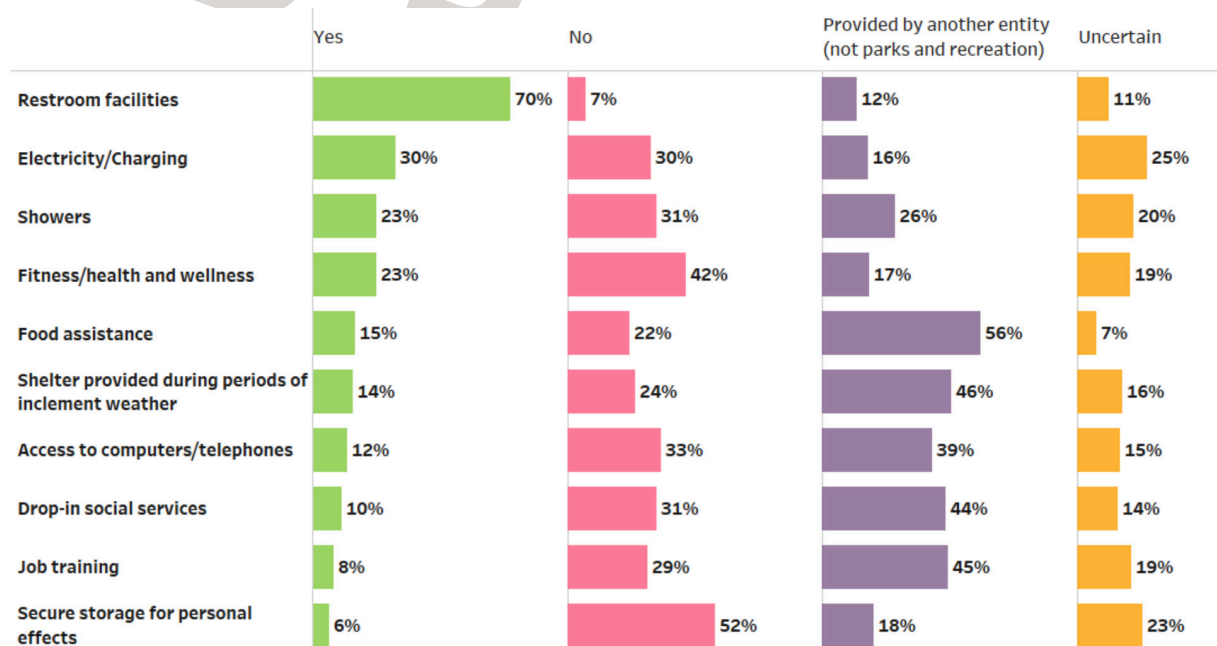
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9   Nathan, Suzanne, September 2018. "Giving Seniors a 'Lyft'" National Recreation and Park Association. Accessed September 2019. https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/September/giving-seniors-a-lyft/

Homelessness

As in Ventura, around the country, parks and recreation agencies are faced with a growing concern of homeless populations in their area. Many municipalities may assume that they have the unique challenge of managing homelessness, but in fact thousands of agencies are currently developing initiatives and pilot programs to determine the best way of addressing the issue.

Often, homeless populations may use park benches, shady trees, campgrounds, amphitheaters, and recreation facilities to sustain their livelihood. In 2018 GP RED, a non-profit dedicated to the research, education, and development of parks and recreation agencies, surveyed 150 agencies specifically about how they were managing homelessness in their communities. As seen in **Figure 21** below, many agencies offer services far beyond traditional "parks and recreation." Restroom facilities are the number one facility offered by agencies, but electricity/charging stations, showers, fitness/health and wellness, and food assistance were in the top five.

Figure 21: Are the following services are offered to the homeless population by parks and recreation agencies in your community?

	Yes	No	Provided by another entity (not parks and recreation)	Uncertain
Restroom facilities	70%	7%	12%	11%
Electricity/Charging	30%	30%	16%	25%
Showers	23%	31%	26%	20%
Fitness/health and wellness	23%	42%	17%	19%
Food assistance	15%	22%	56%	7%
Shelter provided during periods of inclement weather	14%	24%	46%	16%
Access to computers/telephones	12%	33%	39%	15%
Drop-in social services	10%	31%	44%	14%
Job training	8%	29%	45%	19%
Secure storage for personal effects	6%	52%	18%	23%

Source: GP RED Homelessness REDline Survey 2018

This has consequences for park and facility managers, along with impacts on the perception of park visitors. In addition to in addition to managing hepatitis outbreaks, concerns over drug and alcohol use by homeless populations, outbreaks, are serious issues. Often, seasonal or part-time parks and recreation employees may be the first line of enforcement. A lack of training, policies, and communication continue to exasperate the issue. Proactive management is a preferred way of managing the issue, but most often, parks and recreation agencies do not directly influence the root of an individual's reasons for being homeless. Rather, agencies are left to deal with homelessness on a case by case basis.

Noted in **Figure 22** below, management is often a balance of prevention and enforcement. The majority of parks and recreation agencies utilize ad-hoc tactics by multiple agencies and non-profits to address issues and provide services. Over 27 percent of respondents said that often city agencies were working on various components of the homeless issue, but not necessarily coordinated together to succeed. Only 23 percent said that there is citywide coordination which spanned across agencies and non-profits.

These kinds of coordinated efforts are key to accomplishing the appropriate balance of prevention and enforcement. Developing a task force that works specifically to address the unique concerns of an individual community can help ensure success. Parks and recreation agencies should reach out to nearby law enforcement, schools, libraries, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, business improvement districts, and Health and Human services to develop a well-coordinated plan.

Figure 22: Tactical Approaches to Managing Homelessness
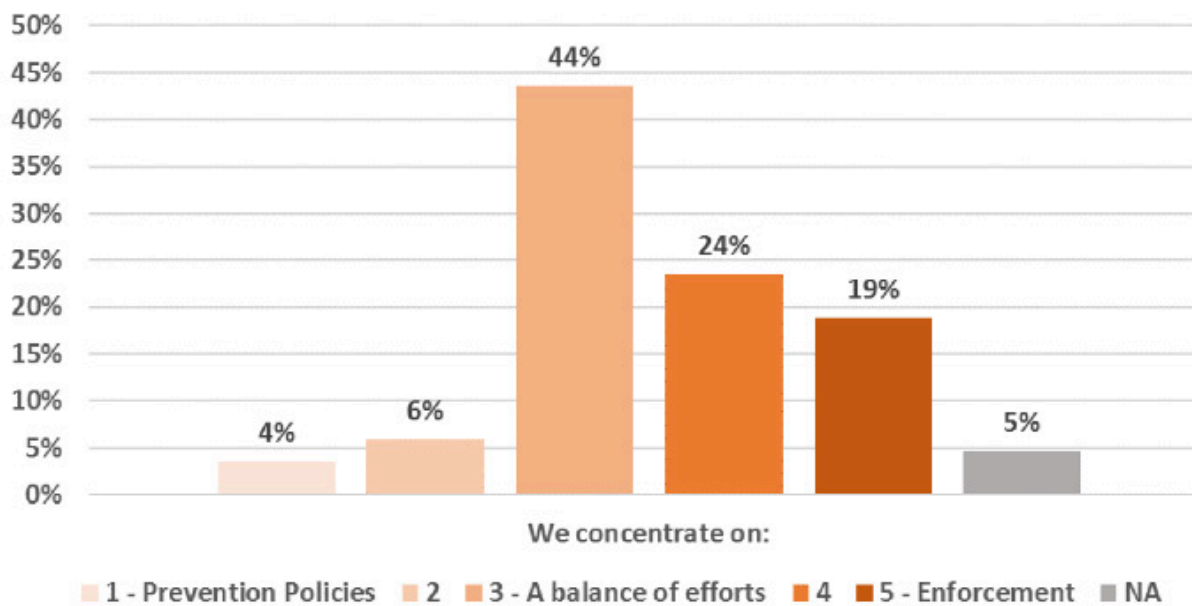
Source: GP RED Homelessness Redline Survey 2018
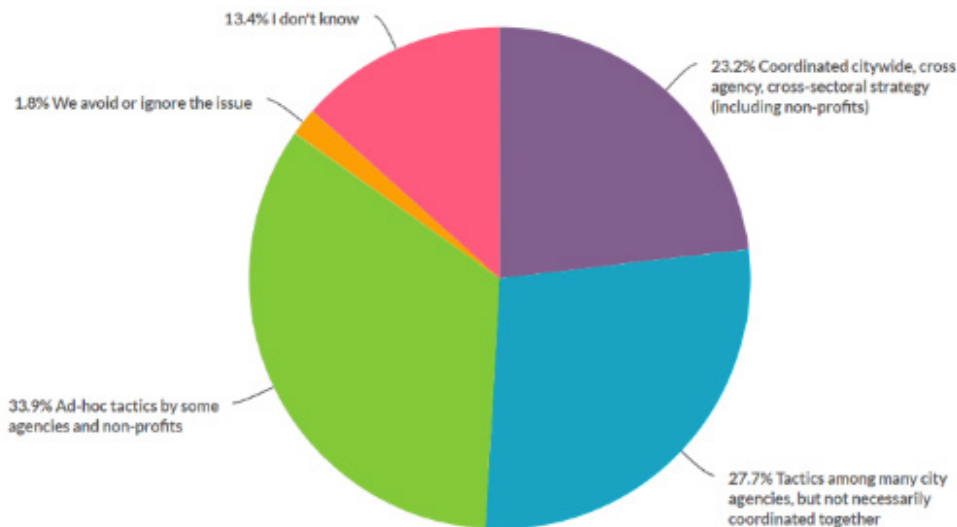
When asked how effective agencies were in dealing with unauthorized camping, over 77 percent of agencies stated they were not at all effective or neither effective/ineffective. Zero percent of respondents said that they were extremely effective in dealing with unauthorized camping in parks and public spaces. Currently, successful initiatives for dealing with unauthorized camping are still in development.

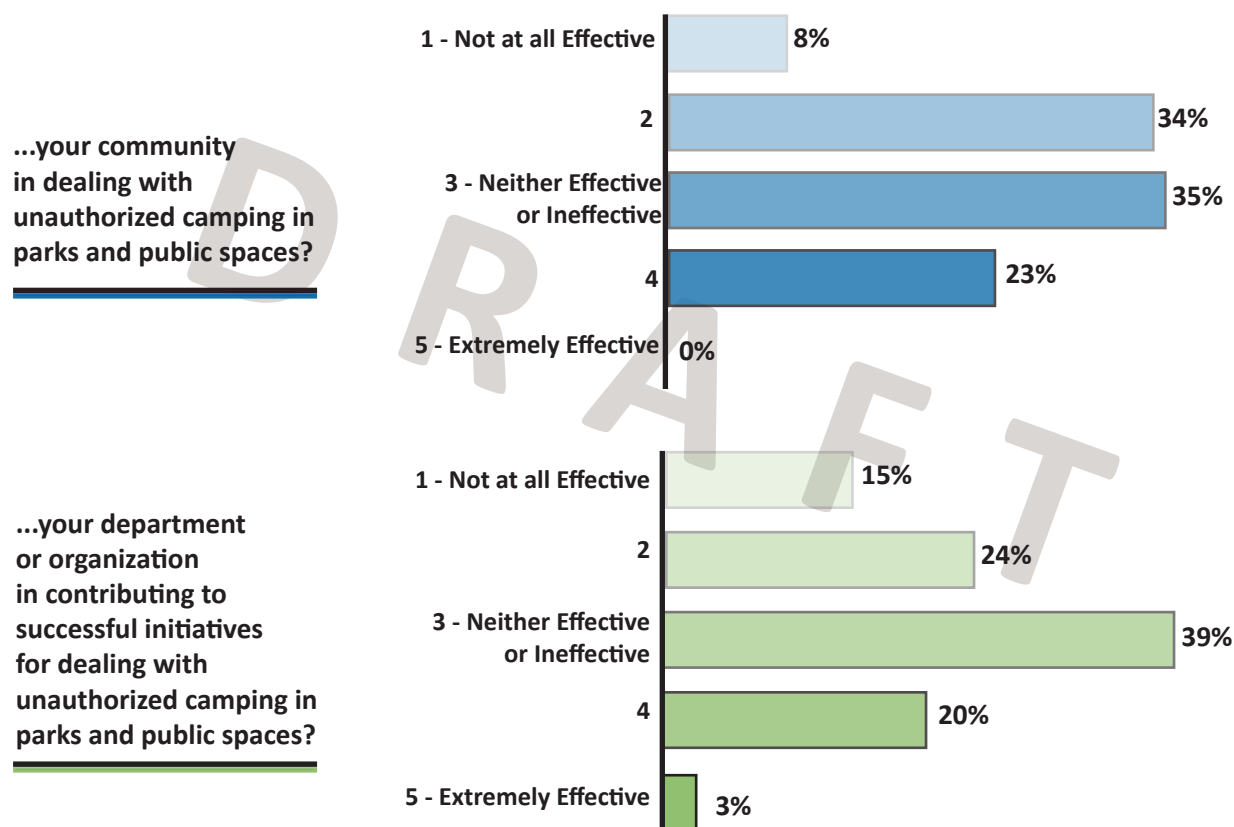**Figure 23: How effective is your community/ is your organization?**

...your community in dealing with unauthorized camping in parks and public spaces?

1 - Not at all Effective	8%
2	34%
3 - Neither Effective or Ineffective	35%
4	23%
5 - Extremely Effective	0%

...your department or organization in contributing to successful initiatives for dealing with unauthorized camping in parks and public spaces?

1 - Not at all Effective	15%
2	24%
3 - Neither Effective or Ineffective	39%
4	20%
5 - Extremely Effective	3%

Source: GP RED Homelessness Redline Survey 2018

Local Recreational Expenditures

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics provides insights about consumer expenditures per household in 2019. The following information was sourced from ESRI Business Analyst, which provides a database of programs and services where City of Ventura residents spend their money. The table below shows the average dollars spent on various recreational products/services. Money spent on fees and admissions related to entertainment and recreation generated the highest revenues of **$8.7 million** in City of Ventura.

Table 5: Recreational Expenditures in City of Ventura, California

Variable	Individual	Total
Entertainment/Recreation - Fees & Admissions	$805.57	$33,791,953
Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Civic Clubs	$271.42	$11,385,515
Entertainment/Recreation - Sports/Rec/Exercise Equipment	$212.42	$8,910,030
Payments on Boats/Trailers/Campers/RVs	$51.89	$7,898,030
Fees for Recreaional Lessons	$165.21	$6,930,257
Entertainment/Recreation - Toys/Games/Crafts/Hobies	$123,27	$6,930,257
Camp Fees	$100.22	$4,203,958
Pet Services	$72.98	$3,061,404
Housing/Fishing Eqiupment	$66.53	$2,790,672
Bicycles	$32.94	$1,381,832
Rental Boats/Trailers/Campers/RVs	$25.65	$1,075,986
Camping Equipment	$19.38	$812,840
Water Sports Equipment	$7.82	$327,842
Winter Sports Equipment	$6.94	$291,049

National Healthy Lifestyle Trends

The population of the United States is becoming more diverse. As demographics are experiencing an age and ethnic shift, so too are landscapes, daily lifestyles and habits changing. The number of adults over the age of 65 has increased, and lifestyle changes have encouraged less physical activity. Collectively, these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Below are examples of trends and government responses. More and more, local governments are accepting the role of providing preventative health care through park and recreation services. The following facts are from an International City/County Management local government survey.[10][11]

» 89% of respondents' parks and recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
» 84% had already implemented recreation programs that encourage active living in their community.
» The highest priority selected for the greatest impact on community health and physical inactivity was a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

10 "Active Living Approached by Local Government: Survey," International City/County Management Association, http://bookstore.icma.org/freedocs/Active%20Living%20and%20Social%20Equity.pdf, 2004.

11 Brian Stapleton, "The Digital Transformation of Parks and Rec" Parks and Recreation, February 2019; https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/february/the-digital-transformation-of-parks-and-rec/

Nationwide Fitness Activity

According to the Sports and Fitness Industry Asociation, high impact interval training (HIIT) and cross-training style workouts, or CrossFit, are two of the top trending aerobic activities. CrossFit combines elements of gymnastics, weightlifting, running, rowing, and other sports to create a varied fitness regime.

With regard to individual sports, off-road triathlons have seen almost 17% average annual growth for the last five years. These races, such as XTERRAs, consist of a competitive combination of swimming, mountain biking, and trail running.

Pickleball, a paddle sport mixing badminton, tennis, and table tennis, is still trending, gaining an average 8 percent growth each year according to the SFIA report. Growing even slightly faster is Cardio Tennis at 9.1 percent. Cardio Tennis is a fitness program that focuses on combining a full body workout with elements of tennis.

Engaging non-participants is one of the challenges of parks and recreation agencies. Data shows that program participation increases, more than any other reason, when first time users join with someone, such as a friend or family member.

Table 6: Nationwide Fitness Trends

Aerobic Activity	5 year Avg. Annual Change	
High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)	↑	9.3%
Cross-Country Style Workouts	↑	6.6%
Row Machine	↑	5.8%
Stair Climbing Machine	↑	5.6%
Aquatic Exercise	↑	5.0%
Tai Chi	↑	5.0%
Strength Activity	**5 year Avg. Annual Change**	
Kettle Bells	↑	7.0%
Individual Sports	**5 year Avg. Annual Change**	
Triathlon (Off-Road)	↑	17.1%
Martial Arts	↑	11.2%
MMA for Fitness	↑	11.1%
Trail Running	↑	9.6%
Boxing for Competition	↑	9.5%
Adventure Racing	↑	7.3%
Boxing for Fitness	↑	6.2%
Raquet Sports	**5 year Avg. Annual Change**	
Cardio Tennis	↑	9.1%
Pickleball	↑	8.5%

Source: 2018 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2012 - 2017

According to the SFIA report, hockey, rugby, and lacrosse have all experienced an increase of participation nationwide. Although roller skating and ice skating have declined in participation, field hockey and ice hockey have both seen growth. Field hockey, from 2016 to 2017, grew 15.9 percent. Ice Hockey has grown 2.8 percent average annually for the last five years. Ultimate Frisbee, touch football, and fast pitch softball have seen a significant decline in the past five years.

Table 7: Team Sport Average Annual Growth

Team Sport	5 Year Avg. Annual Change	
Rugby	↑	16.5%
Baseball	↑	10.4%
Swimming on a Team	↑	10.1%
Fast Pitch Softball	↓	-2.7%
Touch Football	↓	-3.5%
Ultimate Frisbee	↓	-8.7%

Source: 2018 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2012 - 2017

Older Adults and Senior Programming

Many older adults and seniors are choosing to maintain active lifestyles and recognize the health benefits of regular physical activities. With the large number of adults in these age cohorts, many communities have found a need to offer more programming, activities, and facilities that support the active lifestyle this generation desires.

As Baby Boomers enter retirement, they will be looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, arts and cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, Baby Boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults. Boomers are second only to Generation Y and Millennials in participation in fitness and outdoor sports.[12]

Boomers will look to park and recreation professionals to provide opportunities to enjoy many life-long hobbies and sports. When programming for this age group, a customized experience to cater to the need for self-fulfillment, healthy pleasure, nostalgic youthfulness, and individual escapes will be important. Recreation trends will shift from games and activities that Boomers associate with senior citizens. Ziegler suggests that activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because boomers relate these activities with old age.

Public parks and recreation agencies are increasingly expected to be significant providers of such services and facilities. The American Academy of Sports Medicine issues a yearly survey of the top 20 fitness trends.[13] Whether it's Silver Sneakers, a freestyle low-impact cardio class, or water aerobics, more Americans are realizing the many benefits of staying active throughout life. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, popular senior programming trends include hiking, birding, and swimming.

Outdoor Fitness Trails

A popular trend in urban parks with trail use for health, wellness, and fitness activities is to install outdoor fitness equipment along the trails. These kinds of exercise stations have been modernized to withstand weather and heavy use. These can be spaced out or a more popular option is to cluster the fitness apparatus just off the trail with a peaceful and pleasing view of nature or playgrounds.

12 Physical Activity Council, 2012 Participation Report, 2012
13 American College of Sports Medicine, "Survey Predicts Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2015", http://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2014/10/24/survey-predicts-top-20-fitness-trends-for-2015, accessed January 2015.

Outdoor Recreation Behavior

In **Figure 23**, data from ESRI Business Analyst shows popular outdoor recreation activity participation by households in the City of Ventura. Participation was also pulled from the State of California for comparison. The most popular activities in the City of Ventura included:

» Jogging or Running (13.29%)
» Hiking (12.89%)
» Road Biking (10.50%)

Figure 24: Outdoor Recreation Behavior of City of Ventura compared to the State of California
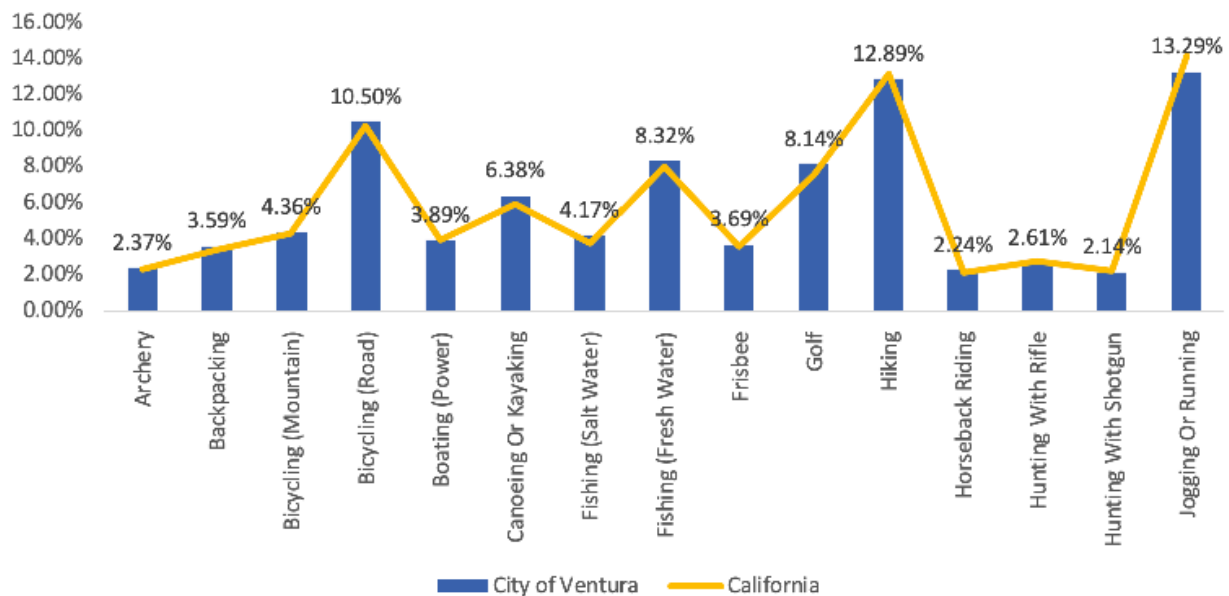
Park Prescription Programs

A variety of programs are emerging around the country that seek to align the medical realm with the parks and recreation offerings in communities. Park Rx America (www.parkrxamerica.org) and Parks Rx (www.parkrx.org) are two organizations that provide resources to local communities wanting to connect with medical providers.

Also popping up in parks around the country are "Walk with a Doc" programs. These programs encourage people to join others in a public park to learn about an important health topic, get a health assessment, e.g. blood pressure, and to take a healthy walk along a scenic trail led by a physician, cardiologist or pediatrician. This is a great way to make the important connection between people, parks and physical and mental health. Cardiologist Dr. David Sabgir created this doctor-patient interactive program in 2004. With physicians 'walking the talk', the programs are getting people out in the parks, engaging in healthy physical activity, and reversing the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle "in order to improve the health and well-being of the country."[14]

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14 "Does your Doctor Walk the Walk," http://flowalking.com/2012/01/does-your-doctor-walk-the-walk/; http://www.walkwithadoc.org/who-we-are/walk-information/, accessed September 13, 2012

Therapeutic Recreation

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) established that persons with disabilities have the right to access the same parks and recreation facilities and programming as those without disabilities.

In 2004, The National Council on Disability (NCD) issued a comprehensive report, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*.[15] This report identified six elements for improving the quality of life for all citizens, including children, youth, and adults with disabilities. The six elements are:

1. Provide affordable, appropriate, accessible housing
2. Ensure accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation
3. Adjust the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility
4. Provide work, volunteer, and education opportunities
5. Ensure access to key health and support services
6. Encourage participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities

Therapeutic Services bring two forms of service, programing and inclusion, into play for persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities need not only functional skills but to have physical and social environments in the community that are receptive to them and accommodating to individual needs. Inclusion allows individuals to determine their own interests and follow them.

Many park and recreation departments around the country are offering specific programming for people with disabilities, but not as many offer inclusion services. In "Play for All–Therapeutic Recreation Embraces All Abilities," an article in *Recreation Management Magazine*,[16] Dana Carman described resources for communities looking to expand their therapeutic recreation services.

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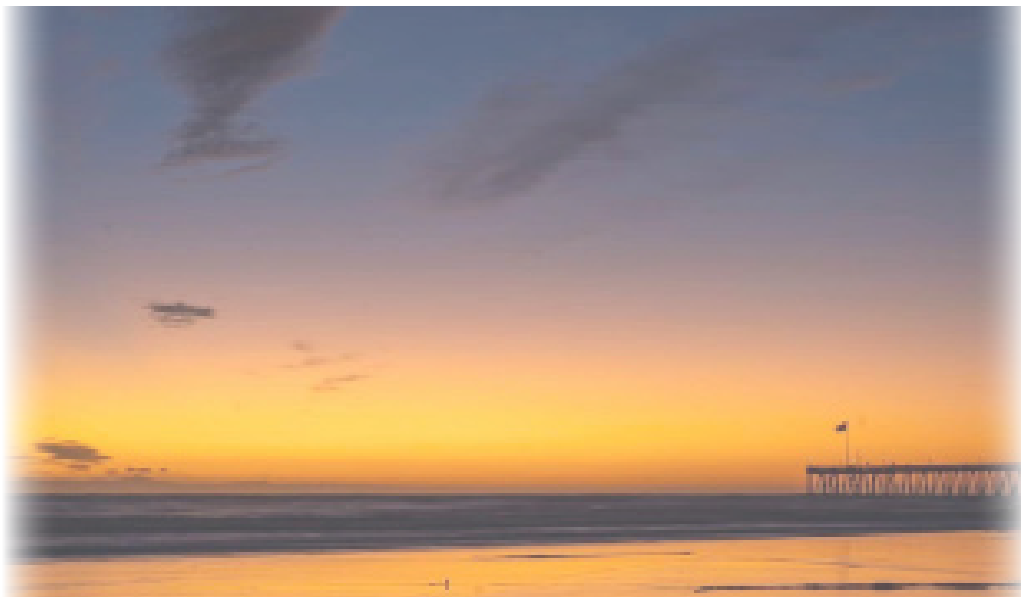
15   National Council on Disability, Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities, December 2004, http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2004/12022004.

16 Recreation Management, February 2007, http://recmanagement.com/200710fe03.php, accessed on February 25, 2015.

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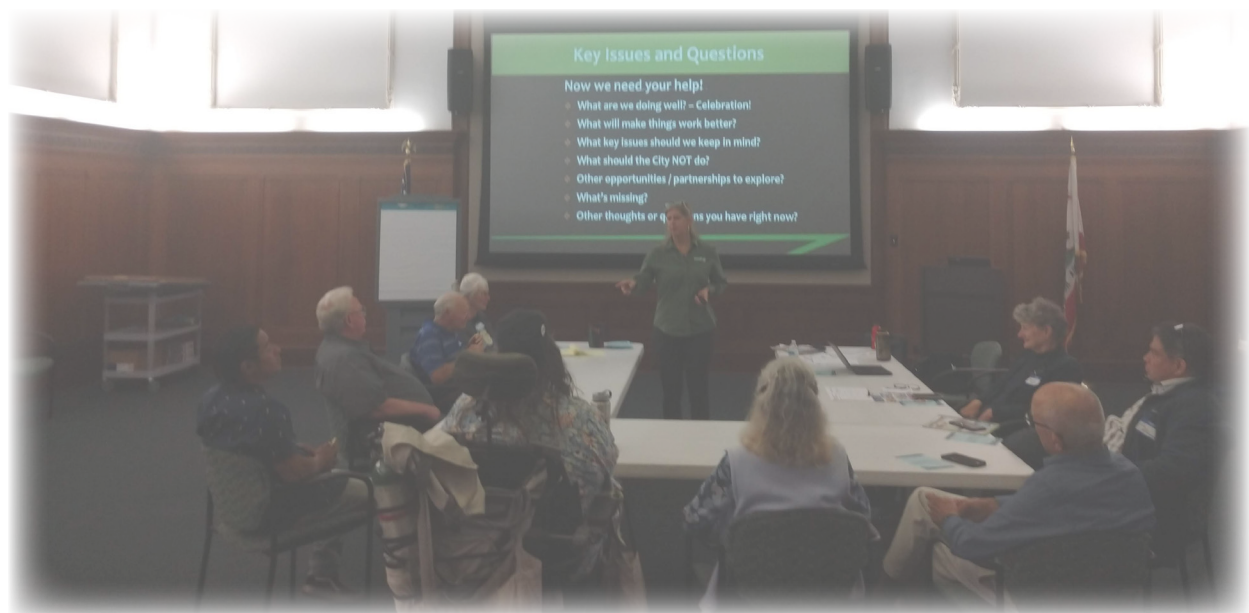THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

II. Community and Stakeholder Input

The City of Ventura implemented a comprehensive information gathering process for the Senior Strategic Plan, involving community members, stakeholders, staff, advisory board members, and many others representing local organizations and businesses.

This stage of the project was comprised of two key components: onsite public engagement and the Senior Needs Assessment Survey. The onsite public engagement served as the primary means of information gathering – each group or individual was asked a series of questions that served as a foundational aspect of the survey. The Senior Needs Assessment Survey then acted as a validation tool to confirm what the consultant team had heard in the meetings. Overall, the process engaged approximately 75 participants through meetings and 680 respondents through the survey.

Figure 25: Community Input Overview

Initial Onsite Engagement

75 Participants

| 6 Stakeholder Meetings | 3 Focus Group Meetings | Senior Ad Hoc Meeting | 2 Community Meetings |

Senior Needs Assessment Survey

680 Completed Surveys

A. Community and Stakeholder Outreach

The City of Ventura staff executed a communications strategy for the plan in order to garner as much feedback from residents as possible. It was essential to include a number of online and offline methods during this process. A variety of key staff and stakeholder interviews were held by phone or in person. **Table 8** showcases the online marketing approach, which resulted in reaching over 69,000 people over a number of email and social media platforms. **Figure 26** provides an example of the advertising that was released to notify residents about the project and to invite them to participate.

The list below demonstrates the efforts that facilitated a successful outreach approach:

» A website project page was created weeks prior to community engagement sharing information on how community members could get involved in the process and "be heard"
» An email sign-up was added to the city website for individuals interested in receiving project updates, additional information, and a link to the survey
» Presentations and announcements about the project and ways to get involved were made at meetings, to community groups, and at city programs and events
» Press releases and news articles were published
» Posters and flyers were located at city facilities & distributed to local businesses, senior service providers, community groups, and program partners
» Handouts and surveys were available in both English and Spanish
» Representatives from Community Councils, local senior service providers, council advisory groups, city staff, and community leaders were invited to participate in focus group sessions and asked to help "spread the word" about the project
» At the end of each engagement meeting participants were asked to share flyers, posters, and the survey link with their personal and professional connections
» Information about meetings, how to provide input, and the survey were posted on Nextdoor, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook
» A series of email campaigns were sent to segmented lists, including older adults, sharing information about each phase of the process

Table 8: Total Reach Based on Online Marketing Strategy

Online Marketing Platform	Outreach
City Twitter	2,882
City Instagram Account	1,511
City Facebook Page	10,834
PRCP Facebook Page	7,811
Excursion Program List - Constant Contact	$823
Older Adults & SSP List (1) - Constant Contact	1,219
Older Adults & SSP List (2) - Constant Contact	1,254
Older Adults & SSP List (3) - Constant Contact	1,277
My Ventura List (1) - Constant Contact	9,460
10/24 - City Staff Email	335
10/25 - Community Council & Stakeholders Email	23
10/24 - Senior Service Provider Email	14
PAC, CAC, LAC, & PRC - Commissions	22
SSP Ad Hoc Committee	7
Total	26,638

Figure 26: Advertisement for Senior Strategic Plan

B. Onsite Community Engagement

From September 30 – October 2, 2019, the consultant team worked onsite with City of Ventura staff for three days to hear from the community. The City of Ventura invited a variety of community members to attend focus group meetings for a 90 minute question and answer session. Meetings were primarily held at City Hall and the Ventura Avenue Adult Center.

The focus groups were made up of a diverse group of community members who utilized the services of the City. In addition, representatives from organizations and businesses across the City participated in the process, including:

- » Camarillo Health Care District
- » CHE Behavioral Health Services
- » Community Memorial Health System
- » City of Oxnard Senior Services
- » City Staff
- » Client Network
- » College Area Community Council
- » Cultural Affairs Commission
- » Downtown Ventura Partners
- » East Ventura Community Council
- » Food Share of Ventura County
- » Kids and Family Together
- » Independent Living Resource Center
- » Library Advisory Commission
- » Midtown Ventura Community Council
- » Montalvo Community Council
- » Museum of Ventura County
- » Ohana Pet Hospital
- » Parks and Recreation Commission

- » Pierpont Community Council
- » Public Art Commission
- » Salvation Army
- » Senior Ad Hoc Committee
- » St. John's Hospital
- » Stiix Pool League
- » Ventura Adult and Continuing Education (VACE)
- » Ventura College
- » Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA)
- » Ventura Council for Seniors (VCS)
- » Ventura County Caregivers
- » Ventura Friends of the Library
- » Ventura Parkinson's Support Group
- » West Side Council
- » Westside Community Council
- » YMCA

Each group was asked a series of deepening questions to help the consultant team further understand the City and the community's perception of senior services. In addition to the focus groups, the consultant team met individually with 6 stakeholders, consisting of City Council members, Ventura Council for Seniors (VCS) board members, and City staff. A separate session was conducted with the Senior Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee.

Finally, two public meetings were promoted in the community to solicit additional feedback. Overall, meetings were well-attended and represented diverse seniors and active adults throughout the City.

Onsite Engagement Feedback

Listening to the community provided essential feedback into the provision of senior services. Hundreds of ideas were captured throughout the engagement process. Overtime, key themes emerged that helped to inform the development of the Senior Needs Assessment Survey. A listing of the recurring items are noted below. The responses provided are not listed in priority order.

What are the *strengths or benefits* of the City of Ventura Senior Services?

» *Recreation Programs:*
the Ventura Avenue Adult Center has great recreation programs for seniors (water aerobics, tai chi, bingo, etc.). The Recreation Division also provides high quality programs. Programs provide lifelong learning for all ages.

» *Senior Nutrition Program:*
This program provides meals for those who may have limited availability of nutritional food.

» *Transportation:*
Transportation allows for isolated seniors to travel to basic services throughout town. There is a decent low-cost bus system for some parts of the City. In addition to transportation around the City, there are also senior trips that are enjoyed – these take participants on trips out of town.

» *Administration:*
City departments and staff are very accessible and they listen well to the community.

» *Communication:*
Email communication is clear, concise, and direct from city staff to Ventura community members. Program Guide is helpful for marketing programs.

» *Volunteer:*
There are many opportunities to volunteer through various agencies, such as clean up events, meal services, etc. Partnerships through Habitat for Humanity offer additional opportunities.

» *Culture:*
There is a strong sense of community on Westside. There are also a number of neighborhood and like-minded groups who are self-created (such as the BCNN Women's Club and many others) which add to a rich culture in Ventura.

» *Public Services:*
The school system is very strong. Public safety is a strong asset and valued throughout the community. Great access to healthcare. Convenient location and very knowledgeable. Educational programs through medical providers are well advertised through direct mail.

» *Partnerships:*
Partnerships through non-profits, county agencies, Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) and churches provide essential services for the City of Ventura. The library and museum are highly valued in the City; these locations act as a community gathering hub. The museum also offers more programs that appeal to a different demographic.

» *Facilities:*
There are nice facilities in Ventura for seniors for assisted living that offer high quality services and programs.

» *Parks:*
There is a new park on the Westside that is walkable for many seniors. The other parks in Ventura are well-used and appreciated by residents.

» *Library:*
There is strong collaboration between libraries and city departments that allows for additional programming and activity space. The library specifically offers low cost or free classes for seniors that provide life-long learning and music and arts education.

Conversely, what are the *weaknesses or deficiencies* of the City of Ventura Senior Services?

» *Transportation*
◊ **Mass Transit System:** City of Ventura is lacking in an effective transit system. The mass transit system provides services but it may take longer than desired. The proximity of the recreation centers is not convenient through the bus system. Bus is cost prohibitive for seniors
◊ **ACCESS:** ACCESS bus system has seen improvements recently, but needs to operate on a more efficient schedule that works well for seniors and people with disabilities. There needs to be a feedback system that improves services for these populations. It can be difficult to schedule ACCESS buses and rely on them for timely appointments.

» **Programs and Services**
◊ **Housing:** Senior affordable housing is lacking throughout the City. This has caused significant displacement of seniors who can no longer afford to live in Ventura, even causing many to become homeless. Many of the mobile home parks, while privately owned, are too expensive and raise rates. The City needs to work with them to develop rent control policies, especially for senior policies.
◊ **Nutritional Foods:** There is a lack of nutritional food for senior population. There is a desire for additional fresh produce pick-ups.
◊ **Fitness Programs:** Programs such as exercise classes should be offered. There is a shortage of programs that are in demand, such as Fitness classes, that may take months to get off the waiting list. Many of the programs are too expensive to attend – priority should be on affordability. Look at other facilities in nearby cities that may offer similar services for different costs.

» **Facilities**
» **Recreation Center:** There is a lack of community and senior services on the Eastside, which could be solved with a recreation center. Seniors expressed that there is a dire need for programs and facilities on the Eastside. The transportation to get to the Eastside can take up to 20 minutes in a car, and up to an hour indirectly in a bus. On the Westside, a swimming/leisure pool with warm water aquatic programs is desired.
» **Performance Center:** There isn't a large space for cultural gathering and event spaces such as the Oxnard Community Performing Arts Center.
» **Parks:** There is a desire to see more parks throughout the City. Some participants recommended looking at creative options, such as old parking lots, to develop urban parks. Some schools are also being used as a shared public space which is a vital resource for play space.

In your opinion, *what kind of opportunities* related to Senior Services should the City of Ventura consider?

» *Overall*
◊ **Senior Programs:** Provide opportunities for seniors to socialize and learn new skills. Create groups for music, choir, instrument, etc. The City needs to create affordable activities that will attract senior populations to leave their houses and stay active. Activities might include arts and crafts, outside group activities, lectures and educational classes, cooking programs, and warm water aerobics classes.
◊ **Multigenerational Programs:** City of Ventura is becoming an older community and seniors want to see a greater focus on bringing together people from all generations. This could involve the revitalization of the Senior Mentorship program that existed several years back. There should be a priority on inclusivity throughout the community in programs and facilities.

◊ **Livability:** It needs to be a value of the city to be a more walkable and livable community. Make streets safer through traffic calming – more crosswalks, reducing speed limits, etc. Desire for more creative parklets, pop-up parks, and modern downtown squares. Would like to see a grant writer that could assist in providing additional funding.

◊ **Facilities:** Encourage use of older underutilized buildings. Ventura Community Park on the Eastside has developed into a construction site, which has made the area and walking areas inaccessible. Perhaps use buildings such as libraries, churches, Pierpont Inn, and abandoned buildings for effective spaces for seniors.

◊ **Community Councils:** There are six different community councils in the City of Ventura, which are non-profits created to be strong representatives for the community. Their role is to be a fluid community group which meets periodically to make progress in the City. There is a potential for greater communication and information sharing through community councils through TV streaming, forums, and other methods.

◊ **Safe Streets:** There is a strong desire to make the City of Ventura a more walkable and safe access community. One of the biggest barriers for seniors while they age is the limitations that occur when driving is no longer safe. If Ventura was easier to walk, then it would be safer for the entire community. There may be additional opportunities through Lyft and Uber. Roadways and sidewalks need to be more senior friendly. Signage needs to be improved through enhanced reflective markings, directional signage, crosswalks, signals, and road markings. There are some good trails but many of the recreational or commuting opportunities are perceived as unsafe. There is a need for improved sidewalks and ADA curbs. It is generally perceived as unsafe to cross the streets. There also needs to be more ADA parking at the Ventura Avenue Adult Center and at other facilities throughout the City.

» *Awareness*

◊ In terms of awareness, there may be opportunities to improve both offline and online communication strategies. Public input was very mixed, as some prefer traditional media such as newspapers, direct mail, and magazines; while others wanted to see more effort made towards social media, Nextdoor, integration with technology like Alexa/Siri, and email marketing. Groups also expressed a need for additional in-person forums for a gathering and meeting space. Gathering spaces such as churches, hospitals, and local businesses should act as a marketing channel to pass on additional information regarding programs and services. The Breeze needs to have more information related to senior programs. Use the library system that already exists to assist seniors in finding information.

» *Underserved Populations*

◊ **Isolated Seniors:** There are many underserved populations – particularly those who are isolated. Many of these community members are "Aging in Place" and may not have the resources or knowledge of how to find services. There is a need for additional caregiver support services. More opportunities for socialization through biking, hiking, gardening, etc. Access to being able to provide information for services for those who don't have internet. Safety is incredibly important to seniors.

◊ **Hispanic/Latino Population:** The Hispanic population is also underserved – there is a language barrier and an awareness issue. There is a need to "go where they are" and find ways to communicate with them – such as schools, libraries, recreation facilities, housing authorities, and the resident advisory community.

◊ **People with Disabilities:** Those with disabilities or seniors with medical equipment may have a difficult time in commuting around the City. They need to have more awareness about the ACCESS bus which can provide transportation services to them. There is also a desire for more programs for people with disabilities.

» *Partnerships*
◊ **Volunteerism:** While there are many volunteer opportunities, seniors would like to see a specific person who can help coordinate and organize the opportunities. The City should emphasize the impact of volunteerism on the City. This type of outreach program would act as an effective recruitment tool.
◊ **Duplication:** Reduce duplication of services by partnering with other agencies that offer similar programs and services. It is important to recognize that the City may not have the resources, while other private and non-profit agencies have the support that can help them. There may need to be a clearinghouse on the database that shows the resources in the website.
◊ **Potential Partnership Agencies:**
   (Asterisks indicate agencies that were repeatedly mentioned in focus groups as potential partners):

o AARP	o Patagonia
o Adult Protective Services	o Masonic Temples
o Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA)*	o Peoples' Self-Help Housing
o Caregivers	o Pharmacies
o Developers	o City Planning Department*
o Downtown Ventura Partners	o Public Safety*
o Faith-Based Community and Churches*	o Restore Ventura
o Habitat for Humanity	o Association of Realtors*
o Hospitals*	o Senior Living Facilities*
o Housing Authority	o Rotary Club
o Kaiser Permanente*	o Salvation Army
o Kiwanis Club	o Ventura Unified School District
o Knights of Columbus	o Senior Housing
o Ventura County Library Services	o Senior Mobile Home Parks
o Lions Club	o VACE
o Livingston Memorial Visiting Nursing Association	o Ventura Community College
o Local Media: KVTA, KCLU, KHAY, CAPs Channel 6	o Veterans Collaborative
	o Westside Pool Initiative
	o YMCA

What other issues or concerns does the City of Ventura need to be aware of?
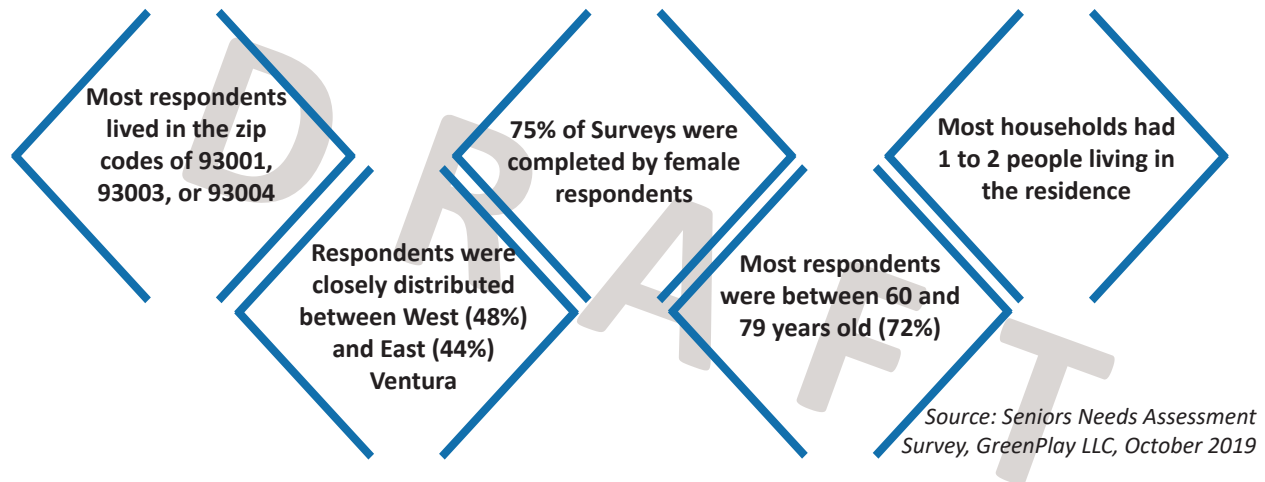
» *Homelessness*
◊ Older seniors may be forced into homelessness, which effects their health and overall wellbeing. The City of Ventura is building a shelter, but there should be additional consideration for how the City will support these individuals. Many homeless populations are on low-income senior housing that may take years to get off the waitlist.
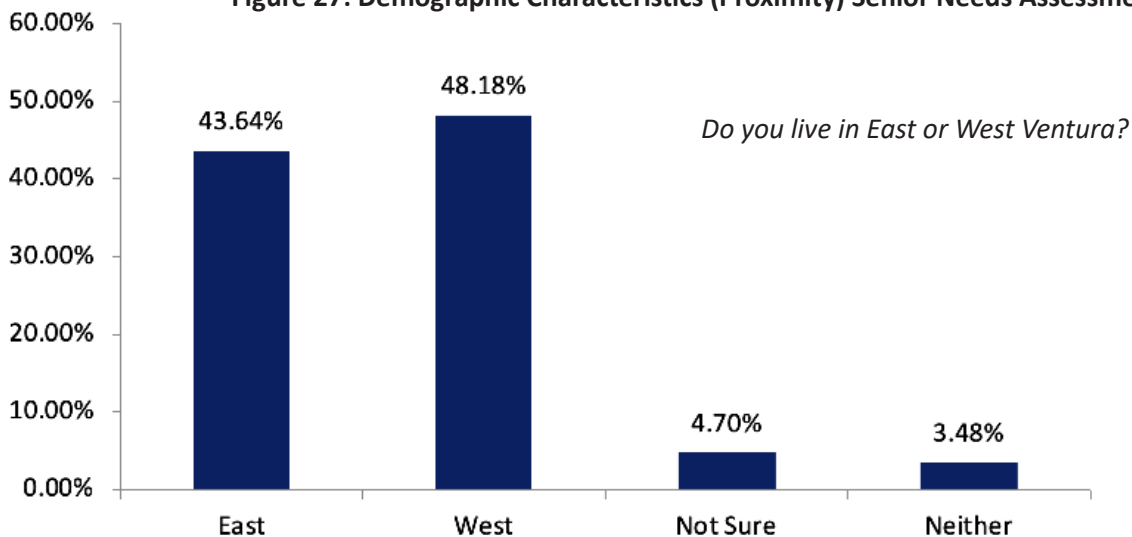
C. Senior Needs Assessment Survey

The Senior Needs Assessment survey was a key public input tool that was a critical component of the public input process. The purpose of the survey was to validate the input that was heard on-site, as well as to hear from a broader group of Ventura residents. The survey, translated into both English and Spanish, was posted online through the City of Ventura website and through email and social media. Surveys were also printed and made available at city facilities and distributed to community groups and local senior service providers and partners. Approximately 81% of surveys were completed online, while the remaining 19% were handwritten. A total of 680 surveys were submitted between October 4th and October 30th.

Survey Demographics

Most respondents lived in the zip codes of 93001, 93003, or 93004

Respondents were closely distributed between West (48%) and East (44%) Ventura

75% of Surveys were completed by female respondents

Most respondents were between 60 and 79 years old (72%)

Most households had 1 to 2 people living in the residence

Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

Over 40% of the survey responses were completed by those that lived in the zip code "93003"; 30% of responses came from 93001, and 24% from 93004. Overall, these three zip codes made up 94% of respondents. Approximately 44% of respondents lived East of Victoria Avenue, while 48% lived East of Victoria Avenue. Approximately nine percent either weren't sure or selected "neither."

Figure 27: Demographic Characteristics (Proximity) Senior Needs Assessment

Do you live in East or West Ventura?

| Category	Percentage
East	43.64%
West	48.18%
Not Sure	4.70%
Neither	3.48%

Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

The primary age groups to complete the survey were those between 60 and 69 years old (38%) and between 70 and 79 years old (34%). Less than five percent of survey were completed by those under fifty years old. The majority of surveys were completed by women (75%).

Most respondents reported that they had two people living in their household (50%), while 31% of respondents lived alone. Approximately 15% of households indicated that they had a need for ADA-accessible facilities and services.

Figure 28: Demographic Characteristics (Age) of Senior Needs Assessment Survey Respondents

What is your age?
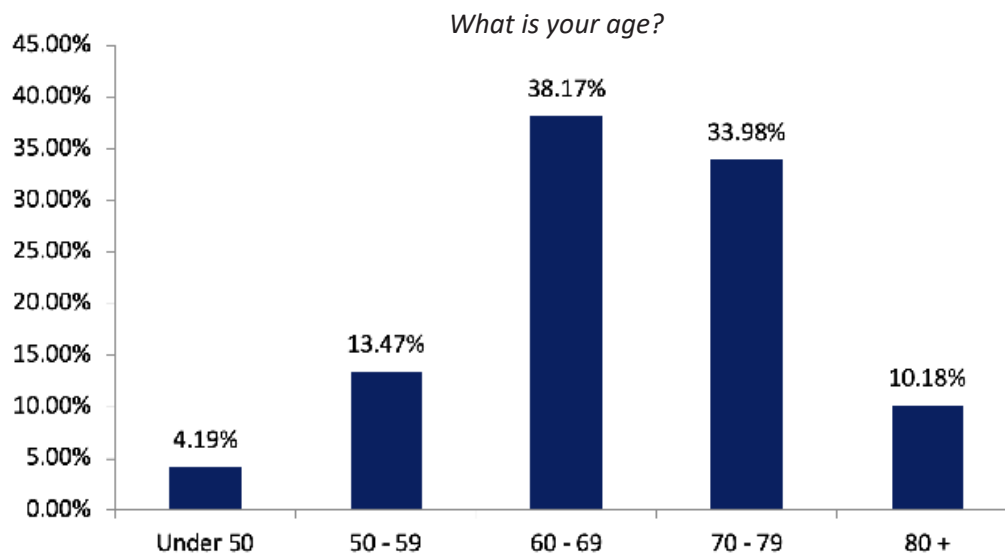
Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

Survey Results

In regards to household participation in Ventura Avenue Adult Center (VAAC) programs, or those held at other city recreation facilities (such as the Ventura Aquatics Center), more than 40% of respondents reported that they never participated. However, for those that responded that they participated "a great deal-at least once a week", many stated that they visit city recreation facilities once a day or multiple times a week. These responses seem to indicate that for those people who do visit Ventura facilities, they are very reliant on them, but there are still many seniors who choose not to use Ventura facilities.

Figure 29: Participation in Older Adult Programs at City Recreation Facilities

How often do you or members of your household participate in older adult programs at the Ventura Avenue Adult Center (VAAC) or other city recreation facilities?
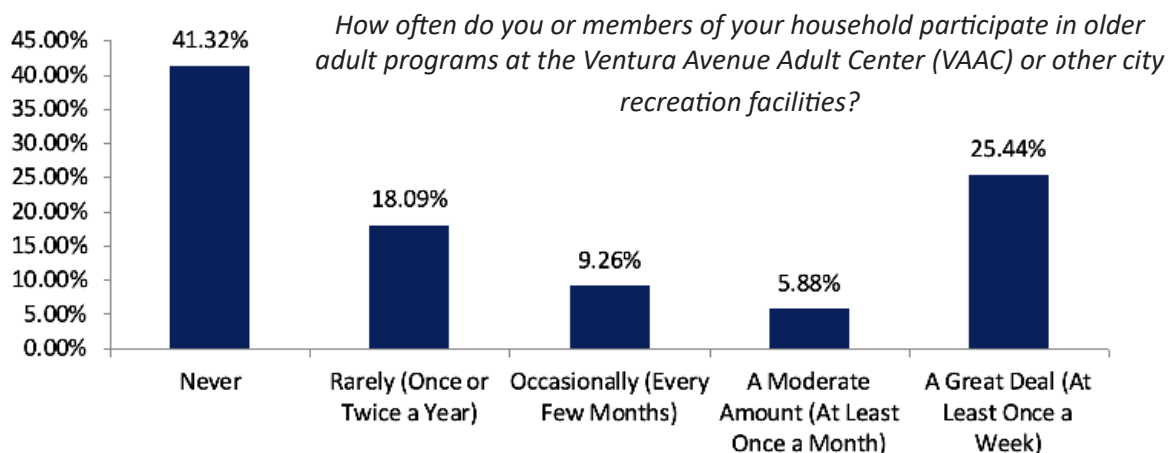
Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

The next question asked about the importance of different types of older adult programs offered by the City of Ventura. Respondents were asked to choose their top five responses, which the results indicate were:

1. Physical Exercise Classes - 66%
2. Cultural Activities (e.g. dance, painting, creative writing) – 41%
3. Travel Programs (e.g. bus and walking tours) – 41%
4. Social Activities – 39%
5. Education and Safety Classes – 35%

Over 12% of respondents provided an answer in "Other – please specify" with computer classes ranked the most important to those who wrote in their own answers.

Figure 29: Importance of Older Adult Programs that are Provided by City of Ventura

Which older adult programs that the City of Ventura provides are most important to you?
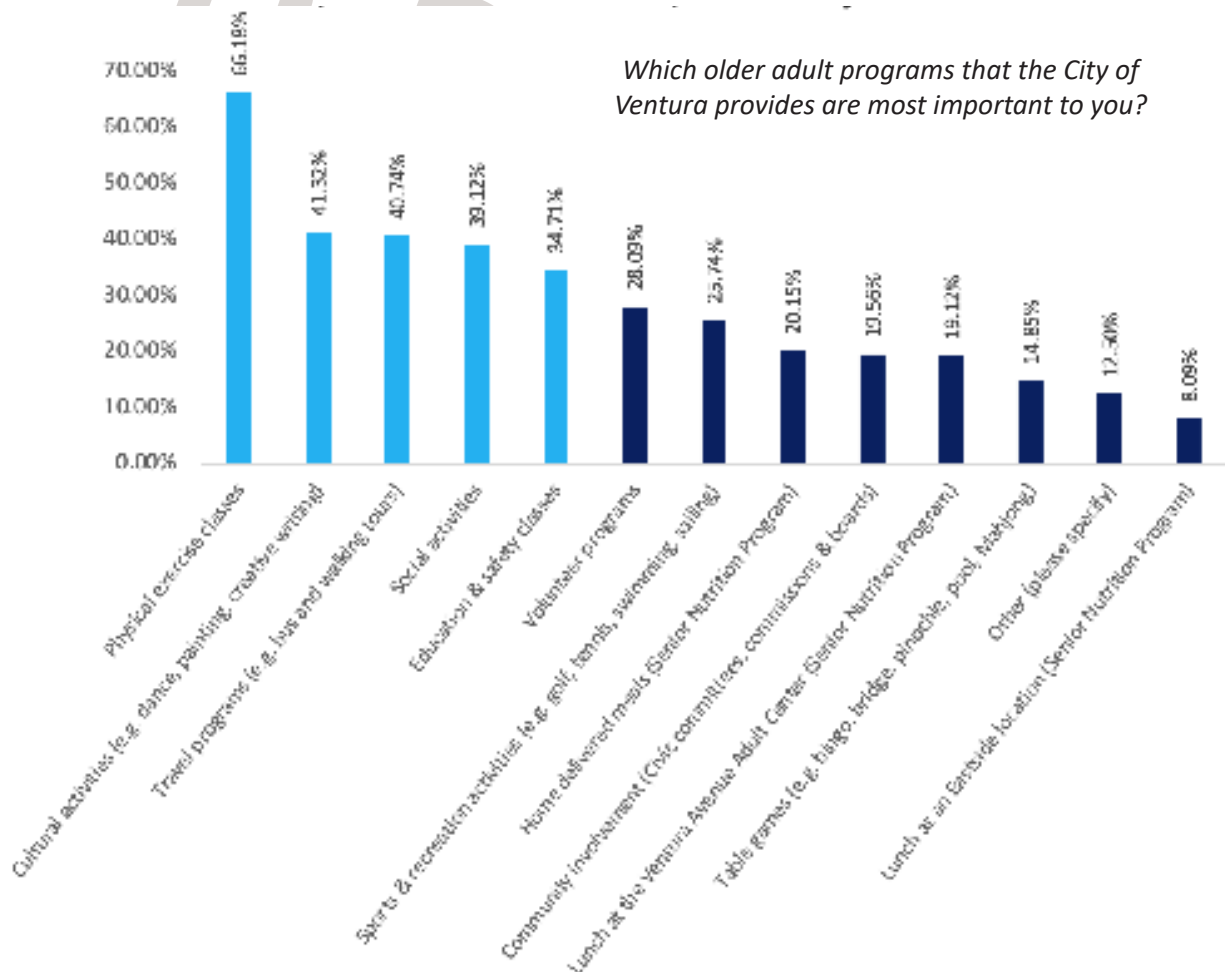
Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

The next section focused on understanding the barriers that might prevent respondents from participating in services and programs offered by the City of Ventura. The top response was that seniors were not aware of facilities or services offered – which was reported by 30% of survey respondents. However, 24% of respondents stated that there were no barriers to participation.

Table 9: Barriers to Participate in City of Ventura Senior Programs and Services

Barrier to Participate	Percent Responses
Not aware of facilities offered	30.25%
None	23.82%
Hours of operation/time offered	18.18%
Services not available where I live	13.48%
Price or user fees	13.17%
Lack of parking	11.29%
No time	11.13%
Lack of facilities and amenities	9.25%
Lack of public transportation	7.68%
Not interested	5.33%
Safety and security	4.70%
Don't feel welcome	3.45%
Inadequate ADA accessibility	2.98%
Overall condition / maintenance of locations	2.98%
Culture or language difficulties	2.19%

Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

In regard to communication, the survey asked respondents to rate how effective the City of Ventura was in communicating about programs and services. Most people stated that the City was "somewhat effective" (36%) or effective (30%), but 16% stated that the City was "not at all effective." Only eight percent rated communication as "extremely effective."

Figure 30: Effectiveness of Communication by City of Ventura Regarding Older Adult Programs

How effective is the City of Ventura at communicating with you about programs and services for older adults?
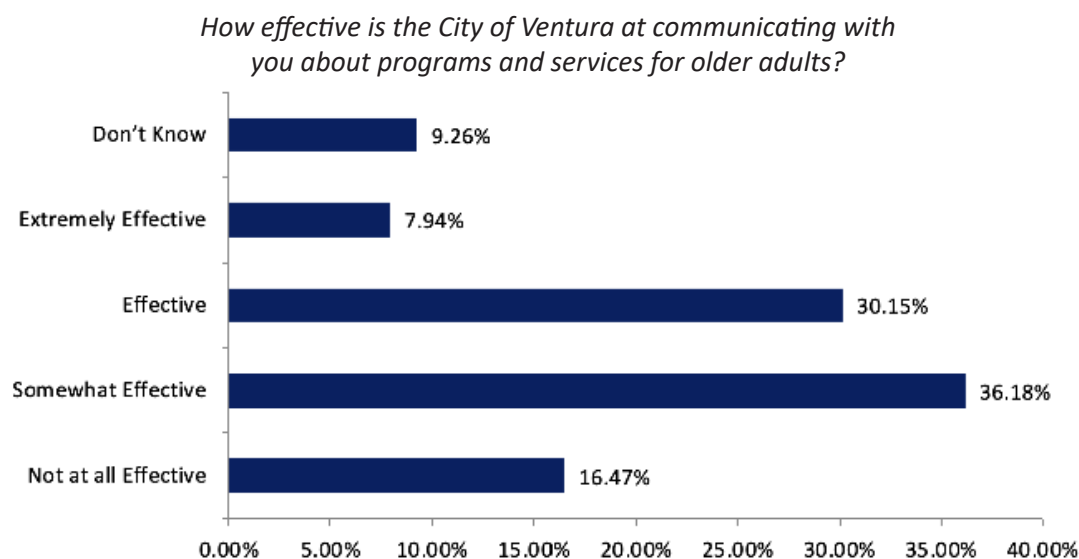
Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

To further understand how to best communicate with senior residents, the survey asked about the preferred methods of marketing. Overall, the MY Ventura Activity Guide/Brochure was ranked as the most valued communication method, with 64% of participants rating it as number one. City e-newsletters were ranked at number two, and local media (e.g. newspaper, Breeze) as number three.

For those that completed the survey in Spanish, participants typically chose "word of mouth" as a primary communication strategy. For those that completed the survey on paper, information posted at city facilities was rated second to the My Ventura Activity Guide.

Some of the "other" feedback – which made up almost ten percent of responses - included posting information at the libraries, churches, community bulletin boards, etc. Respondents would also like to see newsletters delivered in the mail, as well as emails from the City beyond the e-newsletter.

Table 10: Top Preferred Communication Methods According to Older Adults in Ventura

Communication Method	Responses		Communication Method
My Ventura activity guide/brochure	63.97%	22.06%	Flyers/posters at businesses
City e-newsletters	51.18%	18.53%	At a city facility (e.g. City Hall)
Local media (e.g. newspaper, Breeze)	42.50%	12.35%	Word of mouth
Nextdoor	33.68%	10.88%	Radio
Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	33.38%	9.71%	Other (please specify)
City website	29.56%		

Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

One of the primary concerns heard in the on-site engagement was how to respectfully refer to those over 55 years old. The City of Ventura typically refers to this group as "seniors," but there have been other agencies in the area who have intentionally moved away from this terminology to "older adults."

According the survey, nearly 60% of respondents stated that they would prefer for programs and services to be called "senior programs" rather than "older adult programs" (18%). Some of the most popular names generated by participants who selected "other" included:

» 55 and Older Programs
» Active Adults
» Golden Agers

A few of the more creative program names included:

» Boomers	» Honored Citizens	» Young at Heart
» Nifty Fifty Plus	» Recycled Teenagers	
» Gifted Geezers	» Silver Happenings	

Figure 31: Name Preference Related to Seniors and Older Adults in the City of Ventura

When referring to programs and services available for adults 55 and older, which name do you prefer?
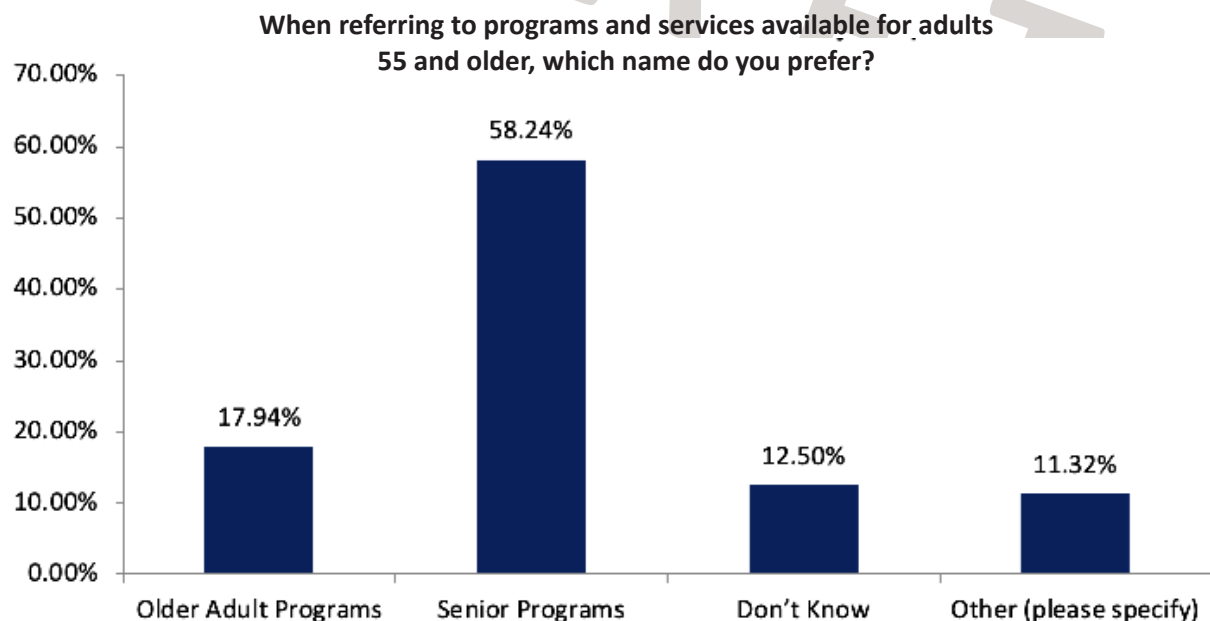
Source: Seniors Needs Assessment Survey, GreenPlay LLC, October 2019

In order to provide services that assist seniors with their needs, it is important to understand how they spend their time. The survey ask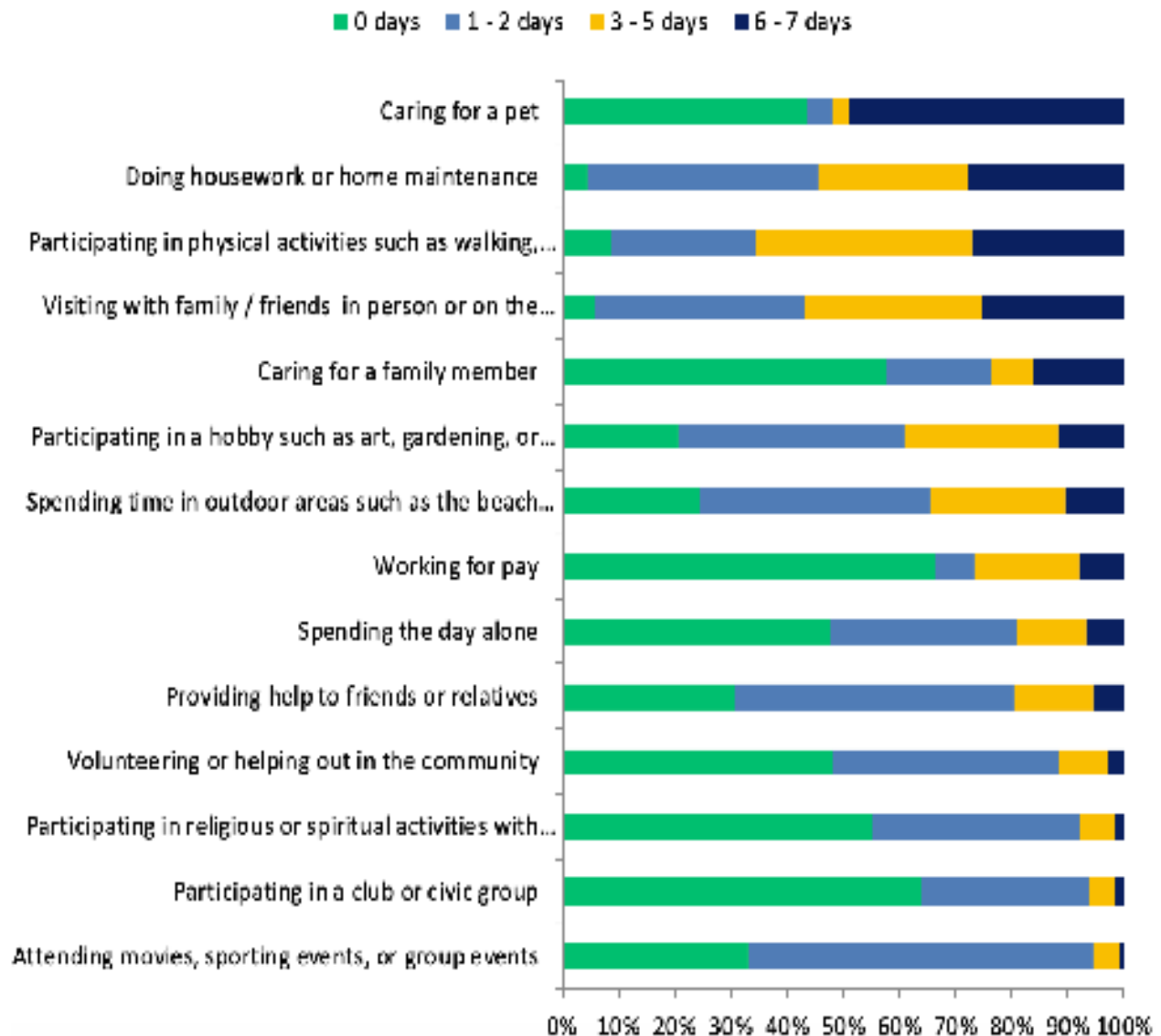ed respondents to select how many days they spent doing a variety of activities. The following table highlights the top five activities, based on the number of days they participate a week, from respondents. **Table 11** visually demonstrates the activities that seniors participate in throughout the week.

Table 11: Activity Participation Based on Number of Days Per Week

0 Days a Week	1 - 2 Days a Week	3 - 5 Days a Week	6 - 7 Days a Week
Working for pay (66%)	Attending movies, sporting events, or group events (62%)	Participating in physical activities such as walking, golf or exercise (39%)	Caring for a pet (49%)
Participating in a club or civic group	Providing help to friends or relatives (50%)	Visiting with family / friends in person or on the phone (32%)	Doing housework or home maintenance (28%)
Caring for a family member (56%)	Doing housework or home maintenance (41%)	Participating in a hobby such as art, gardening, or music (27%)	Participating in physical activities such as walking, golf or exercise (27%)
Participating in religious or spiritual activities with others (48%)	Spending time in outdoor areas such as the beach or parks (41%)	Doing housework or home maintenance (27%)	Visiting with family / friends in person or on the phone (25%)
Volunteering or helping out in the community (48%)	Participating in a hobby such as art, gardening, or music (40%)	Spending time in outdoor areas such as the beach or parks (24%)	Caring for a family member (16%)

Figure 32: Daily Activities of Older Adults in the City of Ventura

Legend: ■ 0 days   ■ 1 - 2 days   ■ 3 - 5 days   ■ 6 - 7 days

Categories (top to bottom):
- Caring for a pet
- Doing housework or home maintenance
- Participating in physical activities such as walking,...
- Visiting with family / friends in person or on the...
- Caring for a family member
- Participating in a hobby such as art, gardening, or...
- Spending time in outdoor areas such as the beach...
- Working for pay
- Spending the day alone
- Providing help to friends or relatives
- Volunteering or helping out in the community
- Participating in religious or spiritual activities with...
- Participating in a club or civic group
- Attending movies, sporting events, or group events

The World Health Organization and AARP highlight 8 domains that cities and communities can address to better adapt their structures and services to the needs of older people. The survey asked respondents to rank, in order of importance, the following items from one to eight with one being the top response. The results show that housing was the number one priority for residents, with community support and health services as number two, and transportation as number three.

Figure 33: Ranking of World Health Organization Quality of Life Domains

1. Housing

2. Community support and health services

3. Transportation

4. Communication and information

5. Outdoor and indoor spaces

6. Respect and social inclusion

7. Social participation

8. Civic participation and employment

The final question of the survey inquired about the top priorities for older adults in the City. This was an open-ended question that focused on the next 5 – 10 years. Some of the key statements from survey participants that reflected many of the other comments are listed below:

Top Priorities:

"A better location for a senior center that would incorporate the Social, Nutritional and Community needs of all areas in Ventura. The transportation needs of seniors [are] continually increasing and needs improvement in the scheduling, availability and service areas."

"Helping Seniors stay in their homes by providing in home assessments and affordable products (or rebates) for elevators or motorized chairs if seniors want to remain in their two-story homes without being a burden on their family, friends or community."

"Cost of living continues to erode the fixed income of seniors. As finances decline, the quality of life deteriorates. This seems to be the biggest complaint of seniors I come in contact with. The City should refrain from added or additional costs of operating or maintaining the City that would affect seniors, such as added taxes on top of the County property tax billing."

"We need to focus on making walkable neighborhoods where seniors and everyone of all ages can gather in the Eastside. Downtown has amenities, midtown as well, and so does the westside and Pierpont--what about the Eastside?"

"Affordable long-term care and affordable health services to seniors staying at their own home."

"Lower cost for seniors to participate in social and recreational activities"

"Allowing people to retire in place by encouraging improved public transportation (especially to areas where classes and senior services are located) and possibly subsidizing rideshare programs for on-call rides like Uber & Lyft."

"Encourage alternative types of housing development for seniors (such as co-housing and tiny homes) located near businesses, services and public transportation. As we age, driving becomes less of an option (or less desirable for financial and health reasons), so living close enough to walk is a really good thing."

"Helping them bring meaning to their later years by engaging with them and giving them a forum to share their wisdom and experiences through volunteer work AND part time employment to help them supplement the high cost of living here."

"We [on the Eastside] need a senior facility. It takes a good 20 minutes to drive to the one on the Avenue. Public transportation from the east to the west is horrible. It can take an hour and a half by bus so we are forced to use our cars. Because the Adult Center is so far away, we are excluded."

"Building a swimming pool in West Ventura for the seniors that have a hard time with transportation."

"Ensuring seniors who do not have access or use social media/ electronics etc., still have access to communication and services, can sign up for programs etc."

"While there are caregiving support groups, more needs to be done to ensure amicable caregiving and recipient partnerships with protective factors that are mutual and not just favoring the recipient. There needs to be built-in models of how to work through issues, so that the caregiver doesn't lose out so that the recipient can win."

"The staff at the senior center is doing a wonderful job. However, because of the nature of my disability I am sometimes excluded from the programs and services. There needs to be an accommodation made that can fix this."

"It seems that the current "ACCESS" transportation is difficult to use. Need to make appointment a day ahead - what if you need something in the next hour? I've heard that people are left behind if they're delayed at a doctor's office. How can people ask for assistance if they don't know where to ask? Or if no one is there to answer the phone and the call goes to voice mail?"

"More exercise classes geared to seniors. Exercise benefits both physical and mental health and helps seniors to stay fit and independent. Most gyms are geared for young participants."

The word-cloud below further represents the key themes that emerged as priorities for survey respondents.

Figure 34: Visual Representation of the Key Priorities to Focus on for Next 5 – 10 Years

Key Findings of Survey Results

Overall, the Senior Needs Assessment Survey was an effective tool to gain feedback regarding senior services and priorities in the City of Ventura. It complemented the on-site public engagement and validated many of the key themes that were heard throughout the outreach process. Some of the primary key themes that emerged from the survey are listed below:

Affordable housing, transportation, and health services are ranked as the top priorities that the City of Ventura should focus on.

» The MY Ventura Activity Guide is an effective tool for older adults to learn about senior programs and services.
» Most adults 50 years and older in the City of Ventura prefer to be called "seniors".
» Many seniors do not visit City of Ventura facilities. However, the majority of those who do visit, attend multiple times per week.
» Physical exercise classes are ranked as the most important classes offered by the City of Ventura, followed by cultural activities and travel programs.
» The top reason that seniors do not participate in programs is due to lack of awareness.

III. Existing Conditions of Services and Facilities

A. Programs and Facilities Overview

The only City facility available specifically for seniors in Ventura is the Ventura Avenue Adult Center (VAAC). The center is open Monday through Friday from 9 am – 3 pm.

Current programs offered at the VAAC include:

» **Meal Programs** - made possible by a financial partnership between the City of Ventura, the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA), and the California Department of Aging (CDA), and includes:
  - Home Delivered Meals – weekly bulk meals delivered to homebound seniors.
  - Lunch at the VAAC, Monday through Friday from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. The menu includes a nutritious hot entrée, salad, fresh fruit, and vegetables. The suggested donation is $3 per meal for individuals 60 years and older and the fixed price is $6.75 for individuals 59 years and younger.
» **Free Drop-In Programs, Classes, and Services** – including: Bridge, Mahjong, Dancing, Bingo, Sewing, Pinochle, Cinema Time, Wii Bowling, Tai Chi Chih, RSVP Bone Builders, Readers Theatre, Mature Drivers, Educational Forums, and services provided by Grey Law and HEAP – Home Energy Assistance Program
» **Fee-Based Program and Classes** – including: Classic Nia, Karate, Yoga, Zumba Gold, Chair Stretches, Creative Writing, Mosaic Arts, and Acrylic Painting
» The VAAC is also available for business and non-profit meetings as well as private events. The facility includes small, medium, and large meeting rooms in addition to a large banquet hall and patio. The maximum capacity is 150 guests.

A major change since the last Senior Services Strategic Plan was conducted in 2013, is the closure of the Senior Recreation Center previously located at 420 E. Santa Clara Street. The previous plan included recommendations for a new Eastside Senior Center, which has not been built.

Additional programs are available for active older adults and are offered in other locations, including the Westpark Community Center, Barranca Vista Center, and the Ventura Aquatics Center. Most of these programs are advertised as open to adults age 13 to 17+, and include classes and drop-in activities:

Shallow and Deep-Water Exercise	Tennis	Mind & Body
Kayaking & Sailing	Pickleball	Adult Sports Leagues
Stand-Up Paddleboarding	Fitness & Yoga	Bocce
Golf	Martial Arts	Billiards
	Dance	Garden Workshops
	Arts & Creative Pursuits	

There is also a Bus and Walking Tours program. Many of these programs are full days offered during the week, so while they are open to all ages, they are used more often by older adults who are retired and have time during the day.

In 2019, 1,851 unduplicated participants age 50+ participated in over 5,355 classes and programs offered through PRCP that required registration in the city's class registration system. In addition, seniors participated in various Department facilitated and/or sponsored free drop-in programs, workshops, events, and volunteer opportunities.

B. Partners and Alternative Providers

The City of Ventura is not the only provider of senior services in the City. There are a vast array of partners and alternative providers that offer programs and services that are appropriate and available for seniors. There is currently not a comprehensive list tracked and available for the public, and additional programs and providers were often identified from additional meetings and contacts throughout this planning process. An organized, comprehensive "umbrella list", database, and/or website of programs and services for seniors would be helpful for the City, the partner agencies, and seniors trying to find those services.

As part of this Strategic Plan, an inventory was completed by staff and the project team. In initial discussions, a few of the primary partners were identified. For example, the largest partner is the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA), which partners and partially funds the senior nutrition program at the VAAC. However, through this planning process, additional inventories and discussions identified 26 known alternative providers and partners for senior services.

Identified partners include (in alphabetical order):

211 Ventura County	RSVP-Bone Builders/Tai Chi
AARP-Mature Drivers	Salvation Army
AARP-Tax	Sam "The Piano Man"
Caregivers	Stiix Billiards
Food Share	The Ventura Choraliers
Gold Coast Transit Access	VACE-Encore Computer Classes
Grey Law	Ventura County Area Agency on
Home Instead Senior Care	Aging (VCAAA)
Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse	Ventura County Community
Association	Health Improvement Collaborative
Long Term Care Services of Ventura	(VCCHIC)
County	Ventura County Library Services
Ombudsman	Ventura Parkinson's Support Group
Readers Theatre	Ventura Post Acute

A few of the primary partners and alternative providers in Ventura include these agencies:

Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA)
This County funded agency provides a variety of services for seniors, caregivers, volunteers, and providers. Programs and services are targeted to ages 60+, persons with disabilities, and caregivers, and include primary services for:

» Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP)
» Fall Prevention
» Senior Nutrition
» Information & Assistance
» HomeShare

VCAAA Strategic Goals for Ventura County (2019-2020)

During a strategic planning session held by the VCAAA Advisory Council in January 2018, the following programs and efforts were identified as priority objectives:

1. Help older adults maintain their independence and ability to live at home.
2. Protect older adults living in long-term care facilities.
3. Provide home-delivered meals.
4. Provide health insurance information and system navigation through unbiased counseling.
5. Provide evidence-based classes that help prevent falls.
6. Provide congregate meals.
7. Prevent abuse and protect the rights of older adults, including case management for abuse.
8. Provide transportation.
9. Provide family caregivers with information and assistance about available resources.
10. Provide emergency food.
11. Communicate to the public who they are, the services provided, and the resources available.

Ventura County Library Services - Seniors Services

County Library Services help meet the needs of senior residents in Ventura by being designated as a "Dementia Friendly Business" in coordination with the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) and by offering:

- » A wide array of cultural programs, such as art, book discussion groups, and music, which help seniors who have limited social connections.
- » Specialized memory "kits" available for checkout for caregivers and others dealing with dementia/Alzheimer's – coming soon.
- » Literature collections on topics of interest to seniors in multiple formats including audio and large print, access to computers and the internet, basic literacy instruction, and more.

In addition, there was an identified opportunity to potentially partner with other faith-based organizations and churches, especially for space for programs or for expanding the nutrition program. The City appears to have strong opportunities for beneficial partnerships. However, currently staffing for senior services is limited so time to do so is also limited.

Ventura County Community Health Improvement Collaborative (VCCHIC)

VCCHIC is a charter bound structure of seven health agencies and hospitals that are committed to addressing health disparities and serving communities with impactful solutions that leverage shared resources and coordinate care. While the primary motive of the collaboration was to complete the 2019 Ventura County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), the VCCHIC has since developed a multi-sectoral partnership with the objective of breaking down silos between health systems and identifying issues that impact the most vulnerable populations. The strategies and programs outlined in this report will be addressed jointly by all the partners of VCCHIC. Further, an active search of more community stakeholders, including media, business, academic, legal, health plans, advocacy, faith and social organizations, who might be able to participate in VCCHIC's growing mandate is currently underway and will be regularly updated on the website of the collaborative: Health Matters in Ventura County. Documents related to this collaboration and opportunities are available online at www.healthmattersinvc.org.

Current VCCHIC Providers and Partners include:

- » Adventist Health Simi Valley
- » Camarillo Health Care District
- » Clinicas Del Camino Real, Inc.
- » Community Memorial Hospital
- » Ojai Valley Community Hospital
- » St. John's Regional Medical Center, Dignity Health
- » St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital, Dignity Health
- » Ventura County Health Care Agency Community Health Center
- » Ventura County Public Health

C. Housing and Homelessness

All forms of information gathering methods indicated that having access to affordable housing is a primary and growing issue for many older adults in Ventura. The City of Ventura works together with the County on issues like this, and solving the housing issue is not something that will be possible for the City's Senior Services Section to address alone. However, the lack of affordable senior housing is often seen and dealt with on the front lines at the VAAC. There are many residents who are currently unhoused in Ventura who use the VAAC on a daily basis, and staff at the VAAC help direct them to potential resources as time allows. Unfortunately, there are reports that waiting lists for affordable housing are high, and there are quite a few homeless senior residents in Ventura living on the streets, parks, beaches, or in their cars.

The City's Safe & Clean Team

Homelessness is an issue that is beyond the scope of the Senior Services Section. The City recognizes the challenges and hired a Homelessness Manager in 2018 to better coordinate potential responses through the Safe & Clean Team.

What is the City doing to address Homelessness in Ventura?

The City of Ventura works closely with local social service providers and the County of Ventura to support programs for long terms solutions for homeless individuals. The Safe and Clean Program is a City led effort to make substantial impacts on homelessness in our community. Here are a few ways the City is working with community partners to address this issue in Ventura:

1) **Program Management:** The City hired a Homelessness Manager in 2018.

2) **Public Safety:** The Ventura Police Department is engaged in what's called restorative policing, or street outreach. This means that officers are working with chronic offenders, by conducting enforcement, uniting them with family or friends if they desire or getting individuals the appropriate medical attention that they need to get off the streets. Embedded within the unit is an eight-person team that addresses mental health, outreach, and patrolling.

3) **Homeless Shelter:** Construction is under way for the first year-round 24/7 shelter opening in early 2020. The shelter will have 55 beds, with the main goal of moving individuals into permanent housing.

4) **Safe Sleep Program:** This program, managed by the Salvation Army, has doubled in size. This is where individuals who are sleeping in their cars can park in specific lots from 7pm-7am. When they enter the program, they are case managed for an hour a week with the end goal being housing.

5) **Transitional Living:** River Haven is a transitional living center made up of tiny homes and managed by the Turning Point Foundation. This center continues to be funded and supports those who are moving out of homelessness but are not ready to enter traditional housing.

6) **Trash Removal:** The newly created Trash Removal Program in the Santa Clara River Bottom provides outreach in the river bottom area. Twice a month the Ventura Police Patrol Task Force and the Safe and Clean Team go into the Santa Clara River Bottom and remove trash bags that are brought to the trail. Homeless individuals are encouraged to bag their own trash. This helps alleviate the amount of larger encampment clean ups, helps build relationships and helps connect individuals to services when they will accept them. This program will end when the shelter opens.

7) **Safe and Clean Hotline:** Created to make reporting issues easier. Please call 805-677-3900 to report debris in public spaces, parks/public bathroom issues, graffiti, potholes and code violations.

8) **Safe and Clean Team:** The four-person team works proactively to address visible blight associated with homelessness, as well as general debris removal from public spaces throughout the City. In addition to removing debris, abandoned camps are cleaned-up in coordination with other partners such as the Patrol Task Force, Public Works, State Parks and Caltrans. The team is on duty 7 days-a-week.

9) **Park Safety Ambassador Program:** Downtown Ventura Partners contracts with Block by Block to offer a Park Ambassador program in Downtown's public spaces and historic core. This includes in and around Mission Park, Plaza Park, the Promenade and bike path, as well as Kellogg Park along the Ventura Avenue. They help mitigate negative behaviors in public spaces.

Learn more about the Safe and Clean program by visiting www.cityofventura.ca.gov or by calling Safe and Clean Program Manager Meredith Hart at 805-658-4735.

There are many other agencies in the region trying to help. A recent report titled Housing Crisis 805 from Cause Now (www.causenow.org) identified that one of the primary challenges is the very high cost of renting a home. In the past five years, rent in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties has increased by 27% while median wages have only grown by 8%. The region has some of the highest levels of rent burden in the state and nation, with housing costs far outpacing incomes. As depicted in **Figure 35**, in Ventura County, the average cost of a one- bedroom apartment in Ventura was over $1,800 per month in 2019. Of those surveyed by Cause Now, 15% had been evicted in the past five years, 43% had received a drastic rent increase over $100 at one time, and 75% had experienced one or more health and safety issues.

Figure 35: Median Rent Prices for a 1-Bedroom Apartment
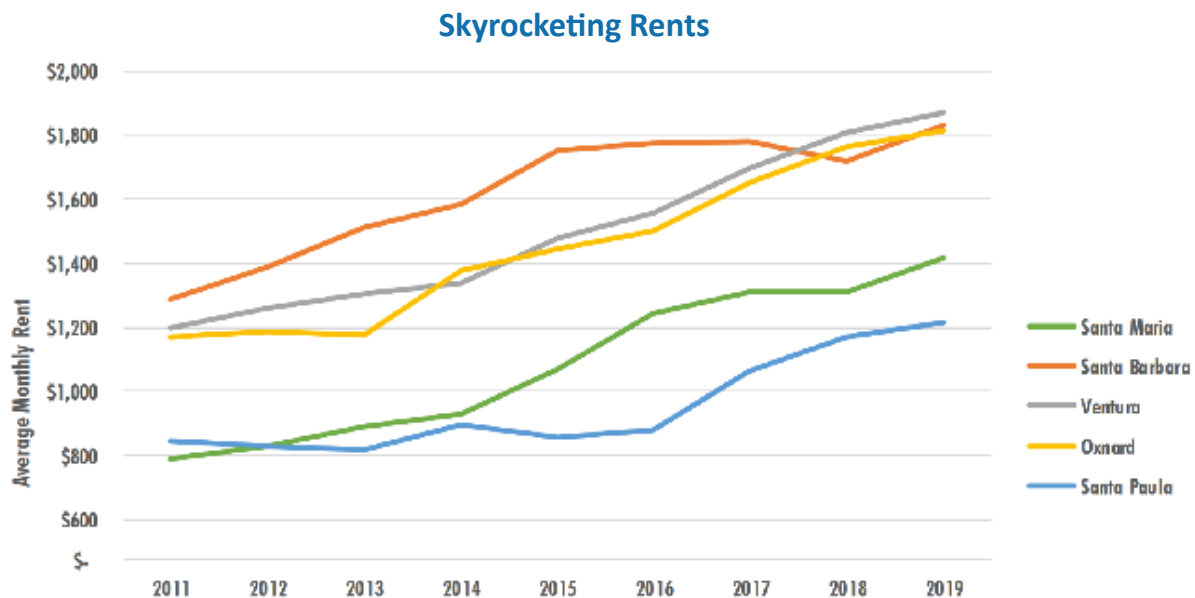
Source: Rent Jungle analysis of rental listings

The results from Senior Needs Assessment Survey respondents indicated that in the City of Ventura, 31% live alone, and 51% live with just one other person. 15% of respondents identified a need for ADA accessible facilities and services, showing the severe impacts these communities are struggling with.

It is beyond the scope of this plan for the Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Department to conduct an audit and prepare a full plan for addressing housing overall in Ventura, but this is a primary issue that really needs to be addressed, especially as the number of seniors in Ventura continues to climb. There are a variety of resources available for community planning. Staff currently suggest referrals to available County programs as time allows, but there is not a position available to fully address this issue. Reports are that the County programs are often full or the seniors have difficulty navigating the paperwork or channels needed to qualify for available programs. As mentioned previously, working with the City's Safe & Clean Team and Cause Now (www.causenow.org), and the VCAAA will be necessary.

The City will need to work with all partners to address this issue. Some additional resources nationally are: The *American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)* which provides a good overview of how this issue can be addressed to improve quality of life, along with suggested policy and planning strategies. Detailed information on AARP's suggested policies around Livable Communities and housing, can be found at: https://www.aarp.org/ppi/issues/livable-communities/housing/. Additional information on practices related to aging in place are available at: https://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/aging-in-place-2011-full.pdf.

One additional option that is growing rapidly around the U.S. is public support and zoning regulation changes that promote co-housing for older adults, especially in communities where housing prices are high. As this may be one potential solution in Ventura, an overview of the co-housing concept is included in **Appendix B.**

| **AARP Housing Principles** |
| » **Improve home design** |
| » **Promote affordable housing options (such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), co-housing, public housing programs)** |
| » **Strengthen federal housing programs** |
| » **Increase capacity for public-private partnerships** |
| » **Promote financial security of housing assets** |
| » **Foster home and community-based service delivery** |

For now, the primary finding on this topic is that it is a real and growing problem in Ventura, and it needs to be addressed by City leadership, in coalition with the County, and other providers. There is not sufficient staff time currently available within the Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Department to handle the current needs for senior resources in Ventura.

D. Transportation and Transit

An additional key issue identified for seniors in Ventura is that there are challenges with accessing safe and reliable transportation for those who may no longer be able to drive. Seniors can't participate in programs or enjoy a strong quality of life if they can't get around to the services and opportunities they need.

There is a lack of reliable and affordable alternative public transportation that can move residents across the City. In addition, for interim services that are available, such as the Gold Coast system, reports are that the service is often not available, may not take residents where needed, and when it is available, the service usually takes a long time, often turning what may be a 1-hour appointment into a half day outing, or longer.

This situation is not unique to Ventura, especially for coastal cities in California. Margaret Heath-Schoep from Gold Coast Transit helped illuminate several of the challenges and issues facing the City related to transportation for seniors. Gold Coast Transit (GCT) District is the local bus operator in western Ventura County, California, serving Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ojai, and the adjoining areas of unincorporated Ventura County. GCT also operates ACCESS, origin-to-destination public transit, for people with disabilities that prevent them from using fixed-route bus service. ACCESS is public shared ride transportation; meaning that users will usually share the ride with others. The driver will usually pick up and drop off other people on the way to destinations, so travel times will be longer than it would be by private vehicle or taxi.

A large part of the challenge is that GCT has limited funding, and the City of Ventura is the most populous city in California without a transit sales tax. The typical cost to provide a $3 ACCESS fare is about $30. According to Heath-Schoep, "We know that the seniors would like a Uber-style point-to point service, however that is just not possible with the limited funds that we have available. Voters have repeatedly voted down additional transit taxes in Ventura." In addition, since the City does not provide a funding match, this limits the amount of state funding that GCT can obtain for services within Ventura. Currently, without additional funds, GCT does not have plans to expand fixed route or ACCESS services within Ventura.

The City of Ventura encourages increased use of active modes of transportation such as biking and walking in order to improve the quality of life in our community. Active transportation promotes healthier citizens, cleaner environment, safety for all roadway user types, and economic development. As the senior population continues to grow, there is a need to increase attention to all modes of safe alternative transportation, including enhanced accessibility for people with disabilities.

Other reported needs include a strong need for updated bike and pedestrian transit plans and improvements. Stakeholders identified a lack of safe sidewalks, crossings, and bike lanes. During early phases of this planning process, an identified need for comprehensive active transportation planning across the City was identified. During the later phases, it was identified that the City was already working on an updated active transportation master plan through other City departments. That plan was not yet completed at the time of this plan's completion. As the population of seniors continues to grow, it will be even more important to include the Senior Services Section in discussions on active transportation.

There are a variety of planning resources that can help the City and partners move forward on this transit issue. It appears from this analysis that additional funding is strongly needed. It is important to enhance the safety and availability of active transportation modes, such as walking and biking, in addition to powered transportation. Additional resources can be achieved through joint attention and adoption of the concepts available from a variety of community planning organizations:

8 80 Cities – www.880cities.org

This non-profit organization believes that if everything we do in our cities is great for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, then it will be great for all people. This is especially true for walkability and active transportation. Embracing these concepts for walkability and biking design can help create a friendlier community for all ages. They provide a variety of tools for opening up streets and engagement around these topics.

Smart Growth America – www.smartgrowthamerica.org

This organization provides a focus on improving lives by improving communities. While this organization is not specific to older adults, many of their concepts are applicable. A recent "field scan" report of best practices for improving transportation and health equity has been provided to staff as a Staff Resource document, and suggests that to improve this challenge, stakeholders must:

1. Reframe the transportation conversation
2. Allocate funding and resources equitably
3. Improve the quality and diversity of transportation leadership
4. Prioritize historically underrepresented communities (such as senior adults) in transportation decision-making
5. Work in unison to provide people-focused infrastructure
6. Invest in communities without displacement

Complete Streets
https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/

Complete Streets is a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. A Complete Streets approach integrates people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks. This helps to ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities, balance the needs of different modes, and support local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments.

The National Complete Streets Coalition, which launched this movement in 2004, promotes the development and implementation of Complete Streets policies and professional practices. To date, over 1,325 agencies at the local, regional, and state levels have adopted Complete Streets policies, totaling more than 1,400 policies nationwide. In addition to the City's current focus on being a *"Bicycle Friendly City"* going forward, it may help the City of Ventura to fully invest and adopt Complete Streets policies and practices, including voices specifically representing seniors.

E. Marketing and Awareness

The City of Ventura is committed to making information available to residents. For this project the following **Figure 36** indicates the most common methods used for marketing to seniors:

Figure 36: Most Common Marketing Methods for Seniors in Ventura

MY Ventura guide/brochure
City e-newsletters
Local media (e.g. newspaper, Breeze)
Nextdoor
Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Instragram, Twitter)
City Website
Flyers/posters at businesses
At a city facility (e.g. City Hall, Aquatic Center, Avenue Adult Center
Word of mouth
Radio

While these methods are fairly typical, the various forms of community input all indicate that there needs to be stronger attempts at marketing and awareness. Quite often in meetings it was found that information existed and was published somewhere, but someone in the room had to point out where it could be found. This was true even for long-time staff and residents. As the study found that there are a variety of partners and offerings, it may be more important for the City to assist as an "umbrella organization" to better use existing channels to help get the information out and more easily available. This is true not only for programs and services that the City offers, but also for those offered by other providers. The City does not have to DO everything, and by making residents better aware of what is offered by others, service increases overall within the City.
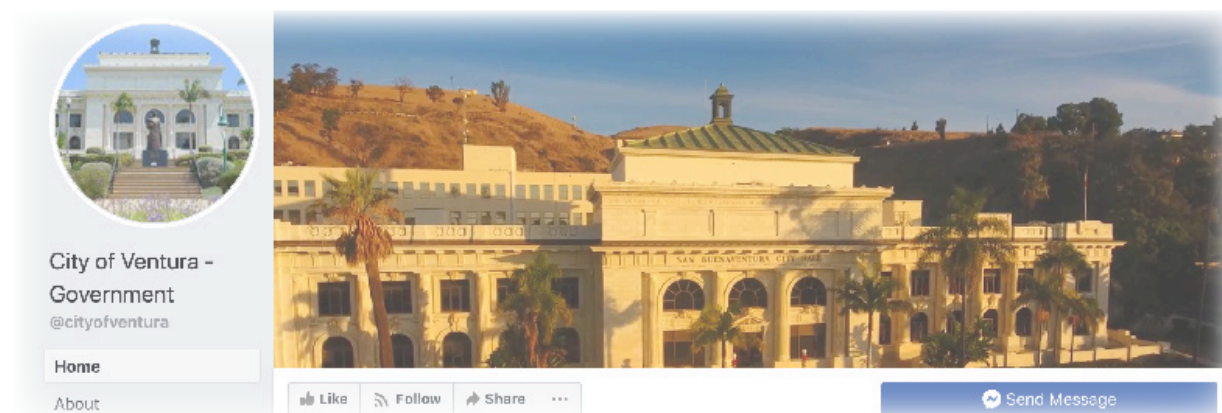
One specific example of this would be to better use the "MY Ventura Activity Guide" and the City's corresponding web pages to co-locate all programs for adults over 50 in the same place. Currently, the programs offered by the Senior Services Section are in one place, and the programs offered by the remainder of the Department (but that may still be available to older adults) are in another place. When one finds only one section, it looks like these programs are limited. If they can't all be located in one place due to page limitations, at least including easily found links to the other pages can help.

This project did identify how important the "MY Ventura Activity Guide" is to this demographic. As indicated in the survey results and from other engagement methods, this guide was deemed very important. While it is the costliest method to produce, it is also the most popular, and has the longest shelf life during each season. The assessment did identify that staffing is somewhat limited for these marketing aspects, but they are highly desired and important to maintain.

F. Staffing Analysis

Staffing for the Senior Services Section is minimal, with **one** full-time staff person managing the VAAC. In addition, some parts of other full-time positions oversee and help support and program for this age group, along with a variety of part-time and volunteer positions. Exact full-time equivalents (FTEs) assigned to senior programming is unknown (the programs are often combined with other age groups, especially in the Recreation Division).

All reports from the community and staff engagement sessions indicated that staffing capacity is a key challenge. If evaluated purely quantitatively using a typical staffing ratio for parks and recreation agencies (see sidebar), in Ventura, with just over 101,000 residents, and over 37% being over the age of 50 in 2019, the number of FTEs assigned to this specific demographic would typically be **31 FTEs.**

Typical Staffing Ratios

One way to view agency staffing is to measure it relative to the population of the area that the agency serves. The typical parks and recreation agency in the U.S has 8.3 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) on staff for each 10,000 residents living in the jurisdiction served by the agency. Agencies tend to have fewer FTEs on staff when located in more populated areas. There are many responsibilities covered by an agency's parks and recreation professionals but nearly half of all primary work responsibilities involve

From the NRPA Agency Performance Review (www.nrpa.org)

IV. Summary of Findings and Visioning

Once all of the methods for information gathering and community engagement were complete, analysis of all methods were summarized and presented in staff, key stakeholder, and public meetings on December 9th and 10th, 2019. A video of the Findings and Visioning Presentation along with all handouts provided was made publicly available on the project website for those who could not make the meetings. A total of 96 people attended the meetings.

Findings were presented, along with a summary of key issues for potential recommendations. The project team discussed each issue in depth, along with potential visioning ideas for feasibly addressing recommendations.

A. The Key Issues Analysis Matrix

To determine the key issues to address, once all of the methods for information gathering and community engagement were complete, analysis of all methods was conducted using a *Key Issues Analysis Matrix* framework. This a**nalysis identified 28 Key Issues to be addressed**, organized under **Five Primary Themes:**

1. General Overall Levels of Service
2. Organizational and Administrative
3. Program and Service Delivery
4. Facilities and Amenities
5. Financial

The matrix included a list of the issues, along with the method of quantitative or qualitative source, and a brief summary of the analysis, including Consultant Opinion. A full copy of the final *Key Issues Analysis Matrix* is included in *Appendix C.*

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V.   Recommendations

A. Senior Strategic Plan Recommendations

The key themes and issues identified during the Findings and Visioning Phase were reviewed with staff, key stakeholders and the public. The identified Key Issues were reorganized under four Key Themes with specific recommendations. The following section outlines the goals and strategies to address the identified needs.

Organizational Improvements

Goal 1.0 - Work with partners to improve housing

The City of Ventura had a higher population of those 50 and older (37.4%), than the State of California (32.6%) in 2019. There will be an increase in median age as large groups of Baby Boomers and younger seniors age (Generation X is now above age 50). Currently, there are already strong needs for affordable housing for seniors, and this challenge is only expected to increase in the coming years.

This strategy is not a task that can be completed by the City's Senior Services Section or the Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships Department (PRCP) but they can be strong advocates, and provide additional information to seniors seen "on the front lines" of service at the VAAC and in other PRCP programs and facilities. Like many other California communities, it is likely that the City as a whole is trying to respond and manage the challenges of homelessness. Quite often parks and recreation facilities become the places where the unhoused residents of Cities live and maintain their basic needs.

There are a variety of agencies and organizations working together to try and manage this challenge. The City has recently hired a new management-level position in the Safe and Clean Section to support and address homeless issues. For PRCP, the primary strategy should be to provide resources for increased staff time to help direct residents in need, along with ensuring a "senior voice" at the table for all City and County-wide efforts. Specific strategies (many in direct alignment with the Safe & Clean Team, VCAAA, Cause Now, and others) may include:

    1.1   The City's Safe & Clean Team should develop an Affordable Housing and Homeless Prevention Policy with guidelines for seniors in Ventura, through direct involvement with the Safe & Clean Manager and staff from the Senior Services Section. This should include clear, updated website links and resources.

    1.2   Assign staff time and adequate resources to respond to emergency shelter needs.

    1.3   Advocate for affordable housing for older adults - connecting housing and transportation in developing long-range planning around housing. This strategy should also encourage the creation of co-housing and multi generational housing, and incorporating universal design.

Goal 2.0 - Improve transportation Options for Seniors

The ability to get around is a strong challenge for many seniors in Ventura. Like the housing issue, PRCP will not be able to solve this issue alone, but should be a strong voice and representative working with many other partners within the City and region to improve transit and active transportation. It is important that they work with a variety of other Departments, other governmental agencies, and other non-profit and for-profit partners.

2.1 Assign staff and funding resources to work with Gold Coast Transit/   ACCESS bus system to increase transit for seniors in Ventura. Some potential improvements could be made through increased staff representation capacity at the regional transit meetings. One potential option could be that the City revisits the potential for a transit sales tax, specifically targeted for seniors, youth, veterans, and people with disabilities in Ventura. Another option would be to fund subsidized point to point and ride sharing services through a funded and staffed program. In addition, it would be prudent to link the City's websites to the Gold Coast ACCESS website to provide additional information for seniors regarding the existing services available.

2.2 Include strong senior representation in overall active transportation planning for the City. Currently the City is updating the bicycle and pedestrian master plan. Enhanced consideration for all modes of active and alternative transportation should be considered.

2.3 Adopt Complete Streets and other related policies to enhance active transportation for all ages at the City level. Additional information on these policies can be found in Section III.D.

Goal 3.0 - Complete a PRCP Departmental Master Plan

This planning process identified a strong need for a full departmental master plan for the Parks, Recreation, and Community Partnerships (PCRP) Department overall. The population of adults age 50+ is over 37% of the Ventura population, and many programming services (aquatics, parks, arts, etc.) are used by all ages. For this plan, it was often difficult to ascertain goals for various program areas and facilities, as they are managed by other Divisions, and there is no "umbrella" master plan to guide the Department for all of these services. Typically most cities in the U.S. have this type of plan completed once every five to seven years, including a full community needs assessment, a statistically-valid survey, a complete geo-spatial analysis of the Departments assets, land, and facilities including a level of service analysis, and overall department organizational, staffing, marketing and communications, and financial analysis.

3.1 The Senior Services Section should work with the Department on an Overall Departmental Master Plan. A sample parks and recreation master plan scope of work and a "Departmental Action Plan Checklist" to help determine needed inclusions have been provided as Staff Resource Documents.

Goal 4.0 - Utilize partners to expand reach of services available to seniors

As identified in Section III.B, this strategic planning process identified more than 30 alternative providers and partners working within Ventura and the surrounding region, and it is likely there are more. The engagement process included a Leadership Summit which included all known partners to a focus group meeting, and later a findings/visioning meeting, to discuss relevant topics. The discussions were lively and highly fruitful, and the group of attendees agreed that this planning process had worked as a catalyst to potentially galvanize ongoing collaboration. Some initial suggested strategies that emerged were:

4.1 Organize a Senior Leadership Task Force with Representative Partners. It was agreed that there are a variety of active voices within the City, and assigning staff to facilitate an organized task force going forward would be beneficial to help with implementation of the Strategic Plan strategies.

4.2   Clarify the Role for Ventura Council for Seniors (VCS). This Council has been beneficial, but the previous structure was difficult to maintain and organize. It could be converted to a Senior Ad Hoc Committee with a bit more structure and shared leadership with volunteer Chair and a City staff person liaison. It will also be beneficial to include this group's lead active members on the Task Force mentioned in strategy 4.1.

4.3   Continue to expand relationships with existing and new partners. The Senior Services Section and Task Force should coordinate semi-annual or quarterly meetings with leaders of the various senior-serving agencies and organizations to improve communication and identify/solve community-wide issues. An Additional option could include facilitation of an online "umbrella" database that coordinates all of the offerings for seniors (City-offered and beyond) into one resource for residents.

Goal 5.0 – Expand staffing and resources for Seniors

It appears that the staffing capacity for managing Senior Services for the City are extremely limited and need to be expanded. While this topic should be evaluated with an overall staffing analysis included in the PRCP Departmental Master Plan as Identified in Goal 3.0, it is apparent that the addition of at least one full-time staff person dedicated to Senior Services is justified, as soon as possible.

5.1 Hire a FT Volunteer/Alternative Funding/Partnerships Coordinator. This strategy would include hiring a coordinator who could assist existing Senior Services Section staff, and with four primary roles:

1. Promoting volunteerism through organization and coordination of a formalized volunteer program for Senior Services.
2. Identifying and applying for creative funding mechanisms, such as grants to assist with funding senior service programs.
3. Facilitating increased partnerships as an assigned liaison to the Senior Task Force, as identified in Strategy 4.1.
4. Act as the liaison for all of the partnered relationships needed for the other recommendations (housing and emergency shelter needs, transportation, etc.)

Enhanced Programs and Service Delivery

Goal 6.0 - Expand awareness of senior services programs

The planning process identified opportunities for increasing awareness. For example, the available program mix for seniors is actually pretty good, once all offerings in the City are found, but finding them can be a challenge. A challenge lies in the fact that this Senior Services Section is actually programming for four decades of adults with a wide variety of physical and cognitive capabilities. The separation of the Senior Services Section programs from other adult programs that may be appropriate for seniors (such as trips, fitness offerings, arts, etc.) can make it difficult to find things. For those not familiar with how the website and MY Ventura guide are organized, it can appear that offerings are limited.

6.1 Consolidate and market program offerings for seniors. This can be done through co-location or cross-referencing of various programs. Letting the seniors decide their capabilities through broad program offerings is desired.

6.2 Update website to become a clearinghouse of Senior Services. As discussed in Goal 4.0, there are a lot of offerings through partners and alternative providers. The City does not have to provide all types of services, but by showcasing and referencing alternative providers, the City helps meet the demand for services, and serves those partners.

6.3 Partner more with the existing 211 Ventura County information service to help expand and further personalize this service for seniors.

6.4 Expand outreach to and inclusion of Hispanic populations. The Senior Services Section should translate program advertisements and information into Spanish. Staff can work with cultural groups to expand program offerings and advertise more effectively.

Goal 7.0 - Add additional needed programs for Seniors

The needs assessment identified gaps in some program offerings for seniors in Ventura. While this needs to be looked at more closely through the context of an overall PRCP Departmental Master Plan, a variety of needed strategies emerged as priorities. Currently there is not room or resources to expand programming at the VAAC, so other options will need to be explored to meet the growing demand.

7.1 Increase physical fitness and sports offerings. These were the most requested additional offerings. In some cases, it may just require increasing awareness of what is offered through other Sections and/or partners (see Goal 6.0).

7.2 Add additional programming on the Eastside. There is a strong lack of programs for seniors, especially social service-related programs (like those offered through the VAAC) on the eastside. This could be done through additional programming at partnered facilities (such as the Salvation Army, faith-based organizations, schools, etc. and will need increased staffing (see Goal 5.0).

7.3 Secure program space at shared facilities – As in Strategy 7.2 for the Eastside, this can be done across the City, especially for fitness and arts programs.

7.4 Expand the Senior Nutrition Program. This program is very popular and could be expanded with a meal site on the Eastside, and additional home deliveries. Additional staffing will be required. The County has indicated opportunities for increased funding.

7.5 Expand additional opportunities for integration with public health. The County-wide VCAAA and the Ventura County Community Health Improvement Collaborative (VCCHIC) both offer suggestions for improving senior health through collaboration. Parks and recreation agencies are increasingly being identified as key providers of preventive public health. Aligning with these county-wide goals can help increase resources and funding.

Arts and Aging

"The 'graying' of America promises dramatic change in every aspect of American life. One of the most profound changes is our culture's very perception of older adults: we're moving from a 'deficit' approach that stresses losses, to an "asset" approach that stresses strengths, potential, and achievements… The ultimate expression of potential is creativity. A critical gap exists between arts provision and aging services for this growing audience. Arts participation is proven to increase the health and well-being of older adults."

Excerpt from Americans for the Arts, Creativity Matters: Arts and Aging in America Monograph https://www.americansforthearts.org

Improved Facilities and Amenities for Seniors

It is not currently recommended to add any additional capital amenities specifically for seniors without first completing the PRCP Departmental Master Plan to incorporate all ages and multi-generational needs. For now, the primary focus is to increase programming space as identified in Strategy 7.3, and to improve the existing facilities, especially the Ventura Avenue Adult Center (VAAC). While a full inventory will need to be completed for the PRCP Master Plan, it appears there are many needs for improved compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and enhanced inclusion for people with disabilities across the system. The existing VAAC does need some work, for increased programming space onsite and specifically to evaluate and potentially expand parking.

Goal 8.0 - Ensure all facilities are ADA accessible

This should be done in accordance with a full City-wide ADA Transition Plan for PRCP, and could also be addressed through a detailed component-based inventory for PRCP facilities. This is mandated by law, and deficiencies were noted in a variety of areas. A full asset inventory was not part of this project. This should be a priority for the City overall, or at least the PRCP Department, as soon as possible.

8.1 Complete a full ADA Inventory and Improvement Plan for all public spaces for the City.

Goal 9.0 Update and upgrade the VAAC

For a small center, the (VAAC) is strong and quite busy, and it needs some improvements. There is some room on site to expand the building, and parking is also a big challenge. The center looks somewhat dated, and could use some additional upgrades. ADA improvements can be made. If upgrades and parking are made, there is demand for additional programming and expansion of revenue generating opportunities (such as working with area assisted living communities and additional rentals). A team should work with an architect to evaluate site expansion/parking potential. In the longer term, it may be beneficial to co-locate these services to a larger multi-generational center on the westside that does not have the site limitations, but that should be part of the overall PCRP Master Planning evaluation. In the short term, potential expansion and dealing with the parking issues are the priorities.

9.1 Expand parking at VAAC. Work with a site designer to evaluate whether any additional parking can be made on site. If not, this may need to be handled through location of an additional parking lot nearby with shuttle services during the day for users. It will continue to be difficult to expand use unless the parking and/or transit issues are improved.

9.2 Upgrade the current VAAC. This can include cosmetic upgrades, and a site evaluation to determine if there can be expansion of the kitchen to a commercial grade (would enhance the meal program and rental opportunities). In addition, a team of staff and seniors can recommend minor changes to improve programming and traffic flow. A budget needs to be allocated for these upgrades.

Goal 10.0 - Explore additional facilities within Overall PRCP Master Planning

There are not currently sufficient facilities, programming, or staffing available to expand programing, and demand is high and will likely continue to increase. Currently, this Strategic Plan is recommending that additional facilities beyond the current VAAC upgrades should be a key issue in the overall PRCP Departmental Master Plan as identified in Goal 3.0. Due to budget constraints and the changing trends in uses for adults as they age, additional stand-alone senior facilities are not recommended at this time, but the need is there for more programs and the space to do them. This should be considered in relationship to multi-generational centers for the community overall, with specific time and programs for seniors included across the City.

10.1 Additional facilities for seniors should be included in a PRCP Departmental Plan. Strong focus should include additional facilities to address:

» Senior specific spaces and facilities as part of multi-generational facilities in East Ventura.
» Potential co-location of new senior-specific spaces in a multi-generational center in West Ventura.
» An aquatic center in West Ventura.
» Additional programming and facilities for all ages and multi-generational integration for fitness, wellness, and arts programming.
» Additional Pickleball facilities; see the following site for recommended construction guidelines - https://www.usapa.org/asbausapa-pickleball-construction-manual/.

Improve Financial Investment for Senior Services

Goal 11.0 - Identify appropriate levels for revenue and resource allocation

Staff report that funding is very tight, budgets are lean, and there are reports that citizens are tax averse. Many seniors currently using services report being on a fixed-income with little disposable income to spare on additional services and programs. With that being said, the median household income in Ventura in 2019 was $74,696. This was significantly higher than the United States ($60,548), and very similar to the State of California ($74,520). The poverty rates for seniors in the County are just over 10%. There is a large segment of older residents that have the ability to pay for programs.

Currently the majority of programs offered by the Senior Services Section are targeted as social services, designed to meet the needs of the lower income populations. While this focus on social services is necessary and should be continued, there is a strong opportunity to expand programming to include higher revenue producing activities and programs that can bring in additional revenue from the majority of older adults in Ventura who have the ability to pay, if those programs are of interest to them.

The programming recommendations under Goal 7.0 indicate many programs that typically have higher cost recovery potential. Currently the majority of these programs that are offered are managed through other Sections. It may be perfectly appropriate for the Senior Services Section to focus on social services, and other Department Sections to focus on the higher revenue services. However, there is a need for more funding for the Senior Services Section and senior programs overall, current cost recovery goals and strategies are not clearly identified, and there does not appear to be a plan or policy in place to help manage these aspects for the City.

There are validated strategies and management methods that can help. Parks and recreation agencies typically have a Cost Recovery/Resource Allocation Policy and Plan, that ties into the Programming Plans and Services Portfolio Assessments. The Pyramid Method for Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery is an accepted method around the country.

Cost Recovery, Resource Allocation, and Revenue Enhancement studies help determine how agencies recreation programs and services should be priced and managed to operate cost effectively while ensuring that fees for programs and services are realistic, appropriate for all levels of income (so that lower income user are not excluded). will allow for operational efficiency, and are easy to explain to the public. The Pyramid methodology build upon an agency's Values, Vision, and Mission. The underlying theory is that public tax dollars and subsidies should be used for those services and programs that provide a community benefit overall. **Figure 37** depicts the Pyramid. Social service type services typically operate under those guidelines. However, there are many other services and programs offered that can and should have higher levels of cost recovery and revenue. Under-pricing services just because some segments are low income often lead to lower participation rates within a community, and financial challenge

Parks and recreation programs are some of the few revenue producing programs for the City. The Senior Services Section and senior programming overall need additional budgets and staffing. To help answer how to address these issues and set goals, the PRCP Department overall should work to garner consensus with Council on a policy and plan for improved cost recovery and fair resource allocation to address the needs. Background documents on the Pyramid Methodology have been provided as Staff Resource Documents.

11.1 Review appropriate resource allocation through creation of a Cost Recovery Plan and Policy. The Pyramid Methodology is a proven method for coming to consensus on these issues.

11.2 Expand revenue generating programs and services.
This can be accomplished through expansion of programming to include activities with higher cost recovery goals. This typically includes updating objective and widely advertised scholarship and fee subsidy aspects so that lower income residents can participate, even when fees are set appropriately higher.

11.3 Include additional Senior Services Section funding. The recommendations include additional staff and resources as described in Goal 5.0 will be needed. With potential of adding new programs and services, budget for adequate staff, funding, and resources will be needed to ensure long term success. This should be allocated through increased annual operational and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budgets.

Figure 37: The Pyramid Methodology

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11.4 Identify and pursue alternative funding and partnership opportunities. There are additional opportunities for funding available through partnerships, grants, volunteer resources, and sponsorships. Currently the Senior Services Section does not have the resources to procure these opportunities. Goal 5.0 address this.
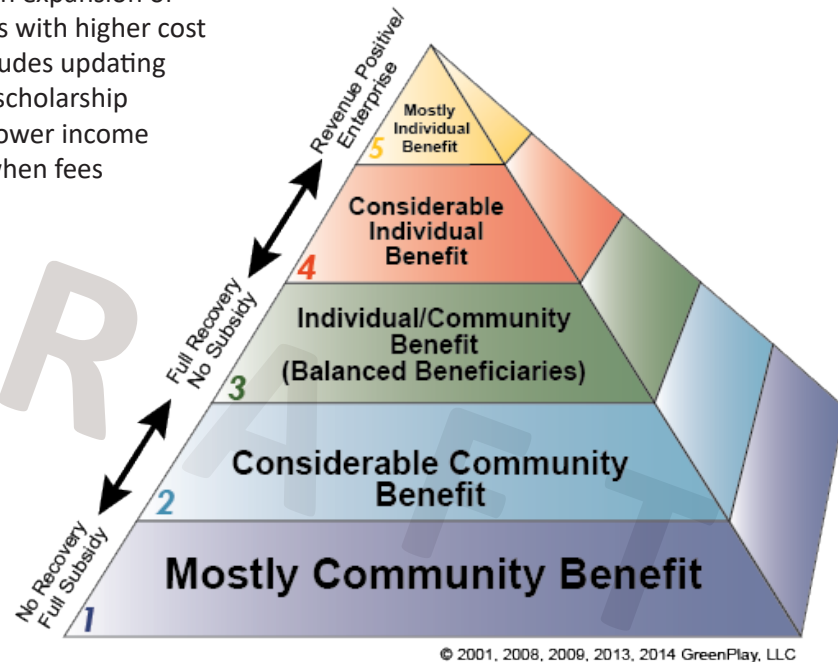
B. Action Plan, Cost Estimates, and Prioritization

The Goals, Objectives, and Action Items for the recommendations are drawn from the community and stakeholder input, service analysis, findings feedback, and all of the information gathered during the Strategic Planning process with a primary focus on maintaining, sustaining, and improving Ventura's Senior Services. All cost estimates are in 2020 figures where applicable. Most costs are dependent on the extent of the enhancements and improvements determined or known at this time.

Timeframe to complete is designated as:

- Short-term (up to 3 years)
- Mid-term (4-6 years)
- Long-term (7-10 years)

Ventura, CA Senior Strategic Plan - Action Plan

Summary Action Plan for 2020 - 2030	Who?		Financial Impacts	When?	
Goals & Objectives	City	Partners	Conceptual Costs	Timing	Anticipated Outcomes / Measures
Organizational					
Goal 1.0 - Work with partners to improve housing					
1.1 Develop an Affordable Housing and Homeless Prevention Policy with guidelines for seniors	■	■	staff time	short-term and ongoing	A Policy is developed by the Safe & Clean Team including Seniors Services
1.2 Assign staff time and adequate resources to respond to emergency shelter needs	■		staff time	short-term and ongoing	Staff time is allocated and assigned.
1.3 Advocate for affordable housing for older adults	■	■	staff time	ongoing	Adequate housing is available for seniors in Ventura.
Goal 2.0 - Improve transportation options for Seniors					
2.1 Assign staff and funding resources to work with Gold Coast Transit/ACCESS bus system to increase transit for seniors in Ventura.	■		staff time + funding for transit	short-term and ongoing	Staff representation at the regional transit meetings. Additional funding is approved.
2.2. Include strong senior representation in overall active transportation planning for the City.	■		staff time	short-term and ongoing	Senior Services staff are involved with alternative transportation planning.
2.3 City adopts Complete Streets and other related policies.	■		staff time	short to mid term	Policies are adopted to enhance active transportation for all ages at the City level.
Goal 3.0 - Complete a PRCP Departmental Master Plan					
3.1 The Senior Services Section should work with the PRCP Department on an Overall Departmental Master Plan.	■		staff time + $100-$125K if contracted	short to mid term	A PRCP Departmental Master Plan is completed, including Senior Services.
Goal 4.0 - Utilize partners to expand reach of services available to seniors					
4.1 Organize a Senior Leadership Task Force with Representative Partners.	■	■	staff time	short term	Task Force meets regularly to help with implementation of the Strategic Plan strategies.
4.2 Clarify the Role for Ventura Council for Seniors.	■	■	staff time	short-term	Role is clearly identified.
4.3 Continue to expand relationships with existing and new partners.	■	■	staff time	short term	Semi-annual or quarterly meetings are coordinated with leaders of the various senior-serving agencies and organizations.
Goal 5.0 - Expand staffing and resources for Seniors					
5.1 Hire a FT Volunteer/Alternative Funding/Partnerships Coordinator	■		FT staff cost	short-terrm	Increased volunteerism, creative funding alternatives, enhanced partnerships, stronger services for seniors.
Enhanced Programs and Service Delivery					
Goal 6.0 - Expand awareness of senior services programs					
6.1 Consolidate and market program offerings for seniors.	■		staff time	short to mid term	Senior offerings are more easily found by the public.
6.2 Update website to become a clearinghouse of Senior Services.	■		staff time	short to mid term	Senior offerings are more easily found by the public on the website.
6.3 Partner more with the existing 211 Ventura County information service.	■	■	staff time	short-term and ongoing	County-wide senior offerings are more easily found by the public.
6.4 Expand outreach to and inclusion of Hispanic populations.	■	■	staff time	short-term and ongoing	Translated program advertisements, information in Spanish, and greater reach.
Goal 7.0 - Add additional needed programs for Seniors					
7.1 Increase physical fitness and sports offerings.	■	■	staff time	short-term and ongoing	Numbers of offerings are increased.
7.2 Add additional programming on the Eastside	■	■	staff time	short-term and ongoing	Additional programming is added at partnered facilities (such as the Salvation Army, faith-based organizations, schools, etc.) on East Side
7.3 Secure program space at shared facilities	■	■	staff time	short-term and ongoing	Additional program spaces is added through partnerships City-wide

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Appendix A: Checklist of Essential

Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities

This checklist of essential age-friendly city features is based on the results of the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project consultation in 33 cities in 22 countries. The checklist is a tool for a city's self-assessment and a map for charting progress. More detailed checklists of age-friendly city features are to be found in the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide.

This checklist is intended to be used by individuals and groups interested in making their city more age-friendly. For the checklist to be effective, older people must be involved as full partners. In assessing a city's strengths and deficiencies, older people will describe how the checklist of features matches their own experience of the city's positive characteristics and barriers. They should play a role in suggesting changes and in implementing and monitoring improvements.

Outdoor spaces and buildings

☐ Public areas are clean and pleasant.

☐ Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.

☐ Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.

☐ Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.

☐ Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with non-slip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.

☐ Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.

☐ Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.

☐ Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.

☐ Services are situated together and are accessible.

☐ Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.

☐ Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.

☐ Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.

Transportation

☐ Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.

☐ Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.

☐ All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.

☐ Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected.

☐ Specialized transportation is available for disabled people.

☐ Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.

☐ Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well-lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.

☐ Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities.

☐ A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited.

☐ Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful.

☐ Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.

☐ Traffic flow is well-regulated.

☐ Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.

☐ Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.

☐ Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.

☐ Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.

☐ Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.

Housing

☐ Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.

☐ Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.

☐ Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather.

☐ Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.

☐ Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.

☐ Public and commercial rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe.

☐ Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.

Social participation

☐ Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.

☐ Events are held at times convenient for older people.

☐ Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.

☐ Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs.

☐ Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people.

☐ A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people.

☐ Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres and parks.

☐ There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.

Respect and social inclusion

☐ Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better.

☐ Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services.

☐ Service staff are courteous and helpful.

☐ Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.

☐ Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.

☐ Older people are specifically included in community activities for "families".

☐ Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities.

☐ Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions.

☐ Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services.

Civic participation and employment

☐ A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs.

☐ The qualities of older employees are well-promoted.

☐ A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted.

☐ Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees.

☐ Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.

☐ Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported.

☐ Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers.

☐ Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people.

Communication and information

☐ A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages.

☐ Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated, centralized access is provided.

- [ ] Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered.

- [ ] Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.

- [ ] People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals.

- [ ] Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.

- [ ] Printed information – including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.

- [ ] Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences.

- [ ] Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.

- [ ] Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.

- [ ] There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries.

Community and health services

- [ ] An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.

- [ ] Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping.

- [ ] Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.

- [ ] Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.

- [ ] Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.

- [ ] Clear and accessible information is provided about health and social services for older people.

- [ ] Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.

- [ ] All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.

- [ ] Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized.

- [ ] Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.

- [ ] There are sufficient and accessible burial sites.

- [ ] Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.

Appendix B

Fact Sheet

AARP Public Policy Institute

CELEBRATING 25 years

Cohousing for Older Adults

Though relatively new on the residential landscape, cohousing is emerging as an appealing living arrangement for aging adults. Both the physical design and the practice of caring for neighbors as they age make this form of "collaborative housing" appropriate for some adults who wish to age in place among friends and neighbors.

Introduction

Cohousing is a form of residential development designed to emphasize community interaction while still retaining and respecting individual privacy. The close-knit nature of many cohousing communities affords older adults the freedom to live independently among friends who believe in active "neighboring" and who look out for one another. Because of these and other features described below, senior cohousing communities can forestall or prevent a move to an assisted living facility and allow residents to age in place as their needs change.

Cohousing Defined

Pioneered in Denmark in the early 1970s, cohousing did not arrive in the United States until two decades later.[1] Although each community is unique, most cohousing communities share a set of principles: resident involvement in the planning process; a common house and other facilities and land owned jointly; a physical layout that encourages interaction (e.g., individual homes clustered around the common house); and collaborative community management.[2]

The roughly 115 cohousing communities in the United States include nearly 2,700 households and are distributed across 23

Table 1	
Top Five States in Completed Cohousing Communities	
State	**Communities**
California	27
Washington	13
Colorado	12
Massachusetts	12
North Carolina	7

Source: Cohousing Association of the United States, Annual Cohousing Census 2008 Results.

states; the distribution, however, is uneven, with the majority located in the West (see table 1).[3] The size of these communities varies considerably, but somewhere between 15 and 35 households is thought to be ideal for preserving close social ties.[4] Housing units average 1,250 square feet[5]—typically smaller than traditional units—and can be single-family detached, townhomes, or condominiums; owned or rented, depending on residents' wants and needs. When owned, as is often the case, the real estate structure is generally that of a condominium or planned-unit development, in which individual units are owned by the household and the community shares ownership of common facilities and common land through a homeowners' association.[6]

In the United States, cohousing originated as a self-development model in which individuals and families interested in creating a community initiated the planning process, which can take several years. More recently, cohousing professionals have streamlined the process by finding and marketing potential sites while still involving future residents in the planning process. Along with the egalitarian way in which the community is managed, this upfront planning imbues cohousing residents with a sense of autonomy and independence and creates what some call an "intentional neighborhood."[7]

Because the physical layout and management structure encourage social interaction, cohousing appeals to those who wish to feel like part of a community. Opportunities to socialize over meals in the common house, to garden or landscape, to carpool, or to babysit are plentiful and provide a welcome alternative to the anonymity and alienation that some feel are the norm in many contemporary residential settings.[8]

Senior Cohousing

Nearly all cohousing communities in the United States are intergenerational, open to families of all kinds and individuals of all ages. However, three existing communities and several more in the planning stages are specifically for adults over the age of 50 or 55 (see table 2). These senior or elder cohousing developments are a twist on the standard cohousing model, incorporating all the principles of the intergenerational model but with features specifically geared toward accommodating the needs of older adults.

Senior cohousing units embrace universal design elements, and communities have accessible common areas.[9] Units themselves are often smaller, with some as small as 800 to 900 square feet, and guest rooms in the common house can accommodate visiting family or be used as studio apartments for live-in caregivers.[10]

Apart from the physical design, senior cohousing communities deviate from their intergenerational counterparts in that residents define their collective approach to aging in community, including the limits of co-care that they are willing to provide to one another. These responsibilities, which are often defined early in the planning process and codified in the community bylaws, are commonly limited to instrumental activities of daily living such as shopping, meal preparation, and housework; they do not extend to activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing.[11]

Advantages of Cohousing for Older Adults

Whether living in an intergenerational or age-restricted cohousing community, older adults can benefit both socially and economically from the many opportunities to gather together, trade favors, and look after one another that this arrangement encourages.[12] Although the cost of a cohousing unit is often on par with or slightly higher than comparable units in the vicinity, overall costs can be lower after factoring in energy savings, shared meals and amenities, and a cooperative approach to transportation.[13] In addition, many

Table 2 Senior Cohousing Developments in the United States			
Name	Location	Households	Completion
ElderSpirit Community	Abingdon, VA	29	2006
Glacier Circle	Davis, CA	8	2005
Silver Sage Village	Boulder, CO	16	2007
Source: www.eldercohousing.org.			

cohousing communities occupy urban infill sites, which can further lower transportation costs and improve access to important destinations such as the hospital, grocery store, and post office.[14]

Beyond the opportunities it offers to socialize with one's peers and remain active, senior cohousing in particular fosters a sense of safety and security among neighbors who know that there are eyes on the street during the day. Smaller units also reduce maintenance costs and leave a smaller environmental footprint.[15]

Perhaps most important, senior cohousing allows residents to live independently and avoid institutional care for longer than might be possible in many conventional single-family neighborhoods. Suites in the common house can be made available to one or more live-in caregivers, who are compensated by residents in need of a higher level of care than their neighbors can provide. In addition to the convenience of living onsite, this arrangement facilitates the integration of the caregiver into the community, which may foster a more personal relationship with residents and improve quality of care.[16] Whether pooling money for a live-in caregiver, housekeeping, or a van and driver, older adults with the financial resources to do so can have essential services delivered onsite rather than in an institutional setting.[17]

If a more acute medical situation arises that requires a higher level of care than can be provided long-term by the community, cohousing neighbors can assist a friend in need by providing "carry-over care" until permanent arrangements can be made.[18]

Challenges Associated with Cohousing

Cohousing's first challenge is simply a lack of public awareness. The general public is largely unaware of cohousing and the advantages it offers for aging in place. For those who are familiar with the concept, a related challenge is that there are very few cohousing communities in the United States, and groups who would like to form new ones must overcome significant barriers. Only one-third of the groups who begin the planning process see their community become a reality for a variety of reasons, including the difficulties of finding a sufficient amount of affordable land, securing city permits, and attracting enough residents who want to create the same kind of community.[19]

A second challenge is that cohousing may not be an affordable option for an older adult with limited assets or income. However, ElderSpirit includes 16 income-restricted rental units and Silver Sage has six permanently affordable units, demonstrating that where there is an identified community need and government support, cohousing can be a viable alternative for low-income older adults.

Increasing the Supply of Senior Cohousing

To increase awareness of cohousing and its advantages, government agencies and nonprofit housing developers who interact with older adults in the provision of shelter could help interested groups understand the concept's benefits as they relate to aging, and provide start-up technical assistance in developing a cohousing plan.

Groups interested in forming a cohousing community would be more likely to succeed if funding for predevelopment activities were more readily available. Hiring an architect, as well as legal, financial, and project management professionals, can be costly endeavors that can hinder a prospective community from becoming a reality.[20] States and localities interested in supporting cohousing may wish to create or extend existing predevelopment loan programs to cover prospective cohousing developments.

Cohousing for Older Adults

Nascent cohousing groups may also encounter difficulties securing the capital they require to fund construction or to subsidize units for those who need financial assistance. States and localities could develop programs to help prospective cohousing groups overcome these obstacles.[21]

[1] Durrett, Charles. *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living—The Handbook.* Berkeley, CA: Habitat Press, 2005; various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit, retrieved Sept. 30, 2009 from www.abrahampaiss.com/ElderCohousing/.

[2] The Cohousing Association of the United States. Retrieved Sept. 30, 2009 from www.cohousing.org.

[3] Morris, Betsy, and Craig Ragland. *Annual Cohousing Census 2008 Results.* Bothell, WA: Cohousing Association of the United States. Presented at the 2008 National Cohousing Conference, June 14, 2008, Boston, MA.

[4] Various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit.

[5] Durrett, Charles. *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living—The Handbook*; various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit.

[6] Various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Brenton, Maria. "The Cohousing Approach to 'Lifetime Neighborhoods.'"" Factsheet No. 29. London, England**:** Housing Learning and Improvement Network, December 2008.

[9] The Cohousing Association of the United States. Retrieved Sept. 30, 2009 from www.cohousing.org.

[10] Durrett, Charles. *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living—The Handbook*; various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Brenton, Maria. "The Cohousing Approach to 'Lifetime Neighborhoods.'"

[13] Various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit; Brown, Ben. *Communes for Grownups.* AARP Bulletin Today. Washington, DC: AARP, November 2004.

[14] Various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit; Brenton, Maria. "The Cohousing Approach to 'Lifetime Neighborhoods'"; Morris, Betsy, and Craig Ragland. *Annual Cohousing Census 2008 Results.*

[15] Durrett, Charles. *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living—The Handbook*; various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit

[16] Ibid.

[17] Bay Area Summit. *Senior Cohousing: A New Kind of Housing for Aging Americans Starts to Catch On.* San Francisco, CA: 2008.

[18] Durrett, Charles. *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living—The Handbook.* Berkeley, CA: Habitat Press, 2005; various documents from the Elder Cohousing Network's Media Toolkit, retrieved from www.abrahampaiss.com/ElderCohousing/.

[19] Yeoman, Barry. "Rethinking the Commune." *AARP The Magazine* 49, no. 2A (Mar.–Apr. 2006) Retrieved March 2, 2010 from http://www.aarpmagazine.org/lifestyle/rethinking_the_commune.html.

[20] Interview with Charles Durrett, The Cohousing Company, July 2009.

[21] For a more detailed discussion of potential strategies to promote cohousing communities, visit the toolkit for meeting the housing needs of older adults at www.housingpolicy.org.

Appendix C

City of Ventura - SSP Draft KEY ISSUES Matrix	Qualitative Data				Quant. Data		Consultant's Analysis and Professional Opinion
Key Issue - Rating Scale a - priority b - opportunity to improve c - minor or future issue **blank** means the issue didn't come up or wasn't addressed	Consultant Team	Staff Input	Public Input	Leadership Interviews	Community Survey	Other City Documents	**GreenPlay LLC** — The Leading Edge in Parks, Recreation, And Open Space Consulting **Preliminary Recommendations**
General Overall Levels of Service							
Improve affordable housing for seniors	a	a	a	a	a		Work closely with partners and organizations that can assist with affordable housing solutions, specifically related to seniors. Identify goals of reducing homelessness for those over 55.
Complete a system-wide master plan for the PRCP Department	a	a	b	b		a	Senior Services should be integrated into a Departmental Master Plan - as many programs and facilities are integrated overall
Improve ACCESS bus system	a	b	a	a	a		Work with GoldCoast Transit to communicate issues related to timeliness, logistics, and customer service specific to service for seniors
Develop a bicycle and pedestrian master plan	a	a	a				Develop an updated comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle plan; identify alternative transportation methods to promote safe streets, increased access, and walkability throughout the City. Utilize 8:80 and Complete Streets Concepts.
Organizational and Administrative							
Utilize partners to expand awareness of services available to seniors	a	a	a	b	b	b	Build upon success of senior-serving agencies and organizations to enhance and expand offerings to seniors and to increase awareness of social services
Ensure staff and resources expand with additional offerings of programs and facilities	a	a	b	b			With potential of adding new programs and services, budget for adequate staff, funding, and resources to ensure long term success
Organize Senior Leadership Task Force with Partners	a	a	b	a			Coordinate annual or quarterly meetings with leaders of senior-serving agencies and organizations to improve communication and identify/solve community-wide issues
Organizational and Administrative (cont.)							
Continue and expand relationships with existing and new partners	a	a	b	a	b	b	Nurture relationships with existing partners and find new ways to share facilities, develop programs, and solve problems related to senior services. Identify new potential partners and assess long term viability.
Hire Volunteer Coordinator/Alternative Funding Manager	a	a	a	b	b		Hire a coordinator with two primary roles of (1) promoting volunteerism through organization and coordination of a formalized volunteer program and (2) identify and apply for creative funding mechanisms, such as grants to assist with funding senior service programs
Expand awareness of senior services programs	a	a	b	a	a	a	Improve communication strategies to enhance awareness of senior programs and offerings
Update Website to Become Clearinghouse of Senior Services	b	b	b	b	b	a	Ensure senior services from City and partners are listed clearly on Ventura website so seniors have a single location for identifying the necessary services they need. Work with libraries to assist seniors in navigating website and providing paper handouts.
Clarify Role for Ventura Council for Seniors (VCS)	b	b	c	c			Establish guidelines, structure, goals, and overall role for Ventura Council for Seniors (VCS).
Program and Service Delivery							
Consolidate and market program offerings for seniors	a	b	a	b	a	b	Organize all senior program offerings by City in Activity Guide and website to improve awareness
Add additional physical fitness and sports offerings	a	b	b	b	a	b	Offer additional physical fitness classes - such as yoga, tai chi, and pilates - that will improve health of seniors.
Expand Senior Nutrition Program	a	a	b	b	c	a	Identify ways of expanding Senior Nutrition Program, such as increasing hot meal offerings.
Program and Service Delivery (cont.)							
Add additional programming to East Side	a	c	b	c	b	a	Additional programming can be offered through additional space at Community Park, or through other partnered spaces (ie. Salvation Army, churches, other partners, schools)
Expand additional opportunities for integration with public health	a	b	c	a		b	All of the WHO domains related to public health. Position the City SS as preventive health provider and partner / coordinate for housing, transportation, food, etc.
Expand outreach to Hispanic population	b	a	b	a	b	b	Translate program advertisement and information into Spanish. Work with cultural groups to expand program offerings and advertise more effectively.
Expand programming to include activities with higher cost recovery goals	a	c	a	b	a	b	Currently most programming is geared towards social services and for those with lower abilities to pay. Enhance program offerings to include more for those who may be interested in higher fee activities.

GreenPlay LLC

CITY OF VENTURA

City of Ventura - SSP Draft KEY ISSUES Matrix	Qualitative Data				Quant. Data		Consultant's Analysis and Professional Opinion
Key Issue - Rating Scale **a - priority** **b - opportunity to improve** **c - minor or future issue** **blank** means the issue didn't come up or wasn't addressed	Consultant Team	Staff Input	Public Input	Leadership Interviews	Community Survey	Other City Documents	**GREENPLAY** LLC *The Leading Edge in Parks, Recreation, And Open Space Consulting* **Preliminary Recommendations**
Facilities and Amenities							
Secure program space at shared facilities	a	a	a	b	b	b	Work with partners to utilize additional space for City programs and services.
Update and upgrade VAAC	a	b	b	c	b	a	Modernize VAAC with updated commercial kitchen and program space
Ensure all facilities are ADA accessible	a	b	b	b	b	a	Continue to work with Public Works Department to follow through with ADA transition plan for VAAC
Expand parking at VAAC	b	b	b	c	a	b	Add handicap and regular parking spots to VAAC facility
Explore feasibility of senior center in East Ventura	c	b	b	b	b	a	Space is needed. A new center may not be needed, but a full PRCP Plan would help determine this need.
Explore feasibility of aquatic center in West Ventura	c	c	b	b	b	b	More aquatics facilities may be needed. A full PRCP Plan would help determine this need.
Financial							
Identify appropriate levels and opportunities for revenue generating programs and services that can enhance resource allocation	a	a	b	a	b	a	The PRCP Department should examine cost recovery and resource allocation through completion of a plan along with the system-wide master plan. There are opportunities, but they need to be integrated with P&R also.
Identify and pursue alternative funding and partnership opportunities	a	a	b	a		a	Using the recommended new volunteer/alternative funding coordinator, assist with finding creative funding mechanisms such as grants
Include additional Senior Services funding in operational and CIP budgets	a	a	a	a		a	Demand is strong. The need is valid, and this could be a key focus area of the overall system plan.